ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

GOING HOME

34

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265
APR

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DIANA SCHUTZ

CEREBUS
NO. 265 APRIL 2001

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer, Characters/ pencil & ink, mechanical tones, lettering

GERHARD
Background Artist/pencil & ink
Cover photo

by: DARK HORSE COMICS 5036649440; 01/18/01 1:52PM; JetFax #814; Page 1

DARK HORSE COMICS, INC.
10956 SE MAIN ST. ♦ MILWAUKIE, OR 97222
PHONE: 503/652-8815 ♦ FAX: 503/654-9440
e-mail: dianas@darkhorse.com

DIANA SCHUTZ ✍ SENIOR EDITOR

DATE: January 18, 2001

FAX TRANSMISSION NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING THIS ONE): seven

FAX TO: Aardvark-Vanaheim, Inc.
519.576.0955

Dear Dave and Ger.

I'm sorry to say that, after seven years, current circumstances make it impossible for me to continue proofreading *Cerebus* text pieces.

Following are six pages of proofs from *Cerebus* #264. I am far too uncomfortable with the remaining pages to offer my proofreading services on them. Because I have not completed this job, you will not be billed.

There is one invoice outstanding, for *Cerebus* #263, and that will go in the mail today.

If you are interested, I will be glad to recommend other proofreaders who are equally thorough and well-versed in comics lore. I would be grateful if you would remove my name from the credits as of issue #264.

Thank you for your consistently prompt payments and the monthly work these last many years.

Diana

Diana Schutz

GOING HOME

- BOOK ONE Sudden Moves (Cerebus 232 to 239)
- BOOK TWO Fall and the River (Cerebus 240 to 250)
- BOOK THREE Form & Void (Cerebus 251 to 265)

SHED MONTHLY BY
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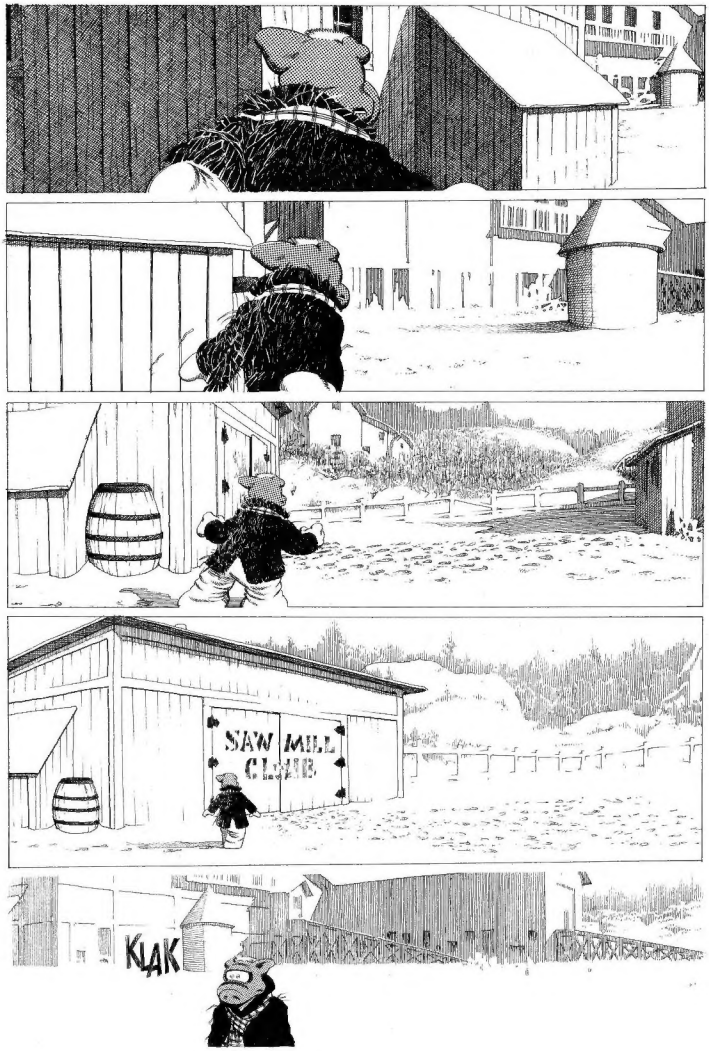
WINDSOR, ONTARIO

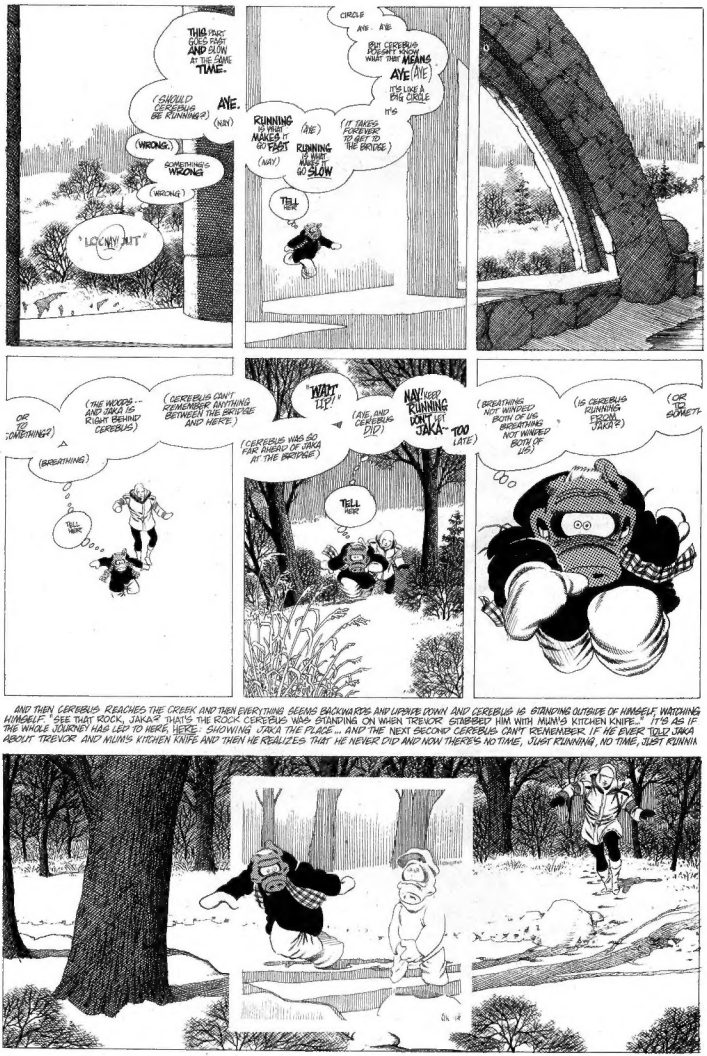
KLAK

KLAK
KLAK
CEREBUS?
CEREBUS?
THUMP

CERBERUS!!
THUMP
("WHAT'S WRONG?")
WHAT'S WRONG?
TELL HER!
(CERBERUS DOESN'T KNOW YET)
THE HELL CERBERUS DOESN'T KNOW YET
SHUT UP
SHUT UP, JANA. PLEASE. JUST SHUT UP.
CERBERUS?


SAW MILL
CLUB
KLAK

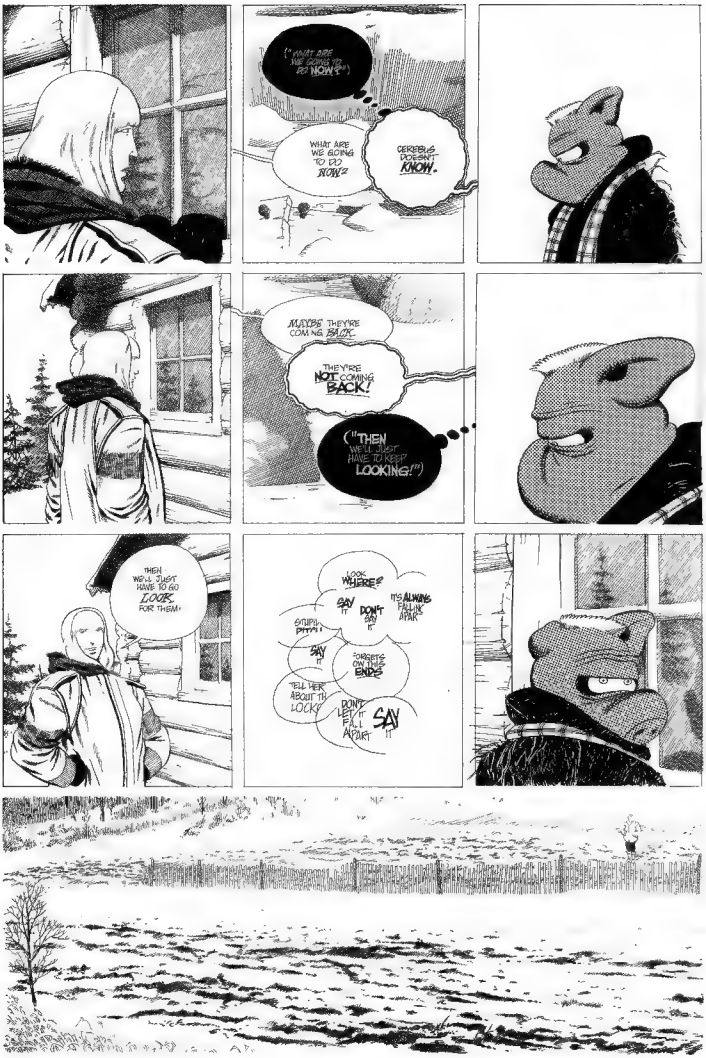
OH!
THE SAWMILL CLOSED
IS IT...
"CLOSED?"
CLOSED?
MILL
SOME PLASTIC WORK THAT
TELL ME!
NAY.
SOMETHING'S WRONG
WRONG?
WHAT DO YOU
CEREBUS!
KNAK
KNAK
CEREBUS!
WAIT!



AND THEN CEREBUS REACHES THE CREEK AND THEN EVERYTHING SEEMS BACKWARDS AND UPSIDE DOWN AND CEREBUS IS STANDING OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF WATCHING HIMSELF. "I SEE THAT ROCK, JAKA? THAT'S THE ROCK CEREBUS WAS STANDING ON WHEN TREVOR STABBED HIM WITH MUM'S KITCHEN KNIFE..." IT'S AS IF THE WHOLE JOURNEY HAS LED TO HERE. HERE: SHOWING JAKA THE PLACE... AND THE NEXT SECOND CEREBUS CAN'T REMEMBER IF HE EVER TOLD JAKA ABOUT TREVOR AND MUMS KITCHEN KNIFE AND THEN HE REALIZES THAT HE NEVER DID AND NOW THERES NO TIME, JUST RUNNING, NO TIME, JUST RUNNIN

NOW, CHERIE'S HOUSE, CHERIE WITH HER LONG, STRAIGHT, BLONDE HAIR, THAT JAKA'S HAIR ALWAYS REMINDED CEREBUS OF, AND THE SOUND FROM INSIDE THE LATCH CLOSING KLAK, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, CEREBUS, OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF, WATCHING HIMSELF, THINKS THE WORD -- LOCKOUT -- AND KNOWS THAT SECOND THAT IT'S REAL, AND IT'S TRUE AND HE PICTURES MR. HAYDEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR, CLOSING THE LATCH AND HE REMEMBERS THE ONLY LOCKOUT HE EVER SAW -- WITH CROTCH-FACE OR BEAR, AND CROTCH-FACE (OR WAS IT BEAR?) SAYING, "HE RAN STRAIGHT TO HIS BROTHER'S PLACE! NOW WHY IN HELL WOULD HE DO THAT?" AND CEREBUS COULD ANSWER CROTCH-FACE (OR WAS IT BEAR?) NOW AND TELL HIM, "IT'S WHAT YOU DO. IT'S JUST WHAT YOU... DO." AND THEN -- CEREBUS ISN'T OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF ANYMORE.
(DAD AND MUM'S HOUSE)
RIGHT THERE!
(THROUGH THE TREES)
WILLING THE LATCH NOT TO GO KLAK--
(WILLING THE LATCH NOT TO GO KLAK!)
WILLING THE LATCH NOT TO
RATTLE
RATTLE
CAN YOU BE ANYTHING?

(IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM)
(THERE'S SOMETHING THERE!)
AYE.
ONE CHAIR
ONE
EMPTY
CHAIR
A-WHO?
(SHE NEVER HEARS CERBERUS WHEN HE SAYS THAT)
ONE. EMPTY. CHAIR.
OH
WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE
(SHE HEARS CERBERUS WRONG)
WELL
OF COURSE YOU HAVE
THIS IS
NAY.
NOT JUST CERBERUS
BOTH OF US


("WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?")
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?
GERBERA DOESN'T KNOW.
MAYBE THEY'RE COMING BACK.
THEY'RE NOT COMING BACK!
("THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO KEEP LOOKING!")
THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO GO LOOK FOR THEM.
WOOK "HERE"?
SAY IT
DON'T SAY IT
IT'S ALWAYS FALLIN' APART
STUPID PITH!
SAY IT
SORRETS ON THE ENDS
TELL YER ABOUT TH' LOCK?
DON'T LET IT FALL APART
SAY IT

MR. MORTON!
MR.
MORTON!

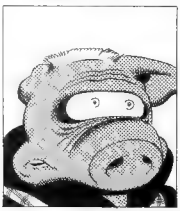
SCUFF

FINALLY.

JOSEPH COME OVER ONE DAY.

TOOK OFF HIS SHOES.

LAY DOWN ON ZEKE'S CHESTERFIELD AND SAID



"MIND IF I.

REST.

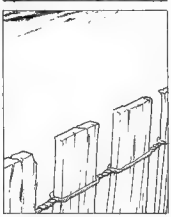
A WHILE,"

WHEN ZEKE COME IN...

ZEKE SAID

IN JOSEPH'S ...GENERAL... DIRECTION

"LOOKS LIKE RAIN."



JOSEPH DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ...BACK...

SO...OF COURSE

JOSEPH AND ZEKE NEVER

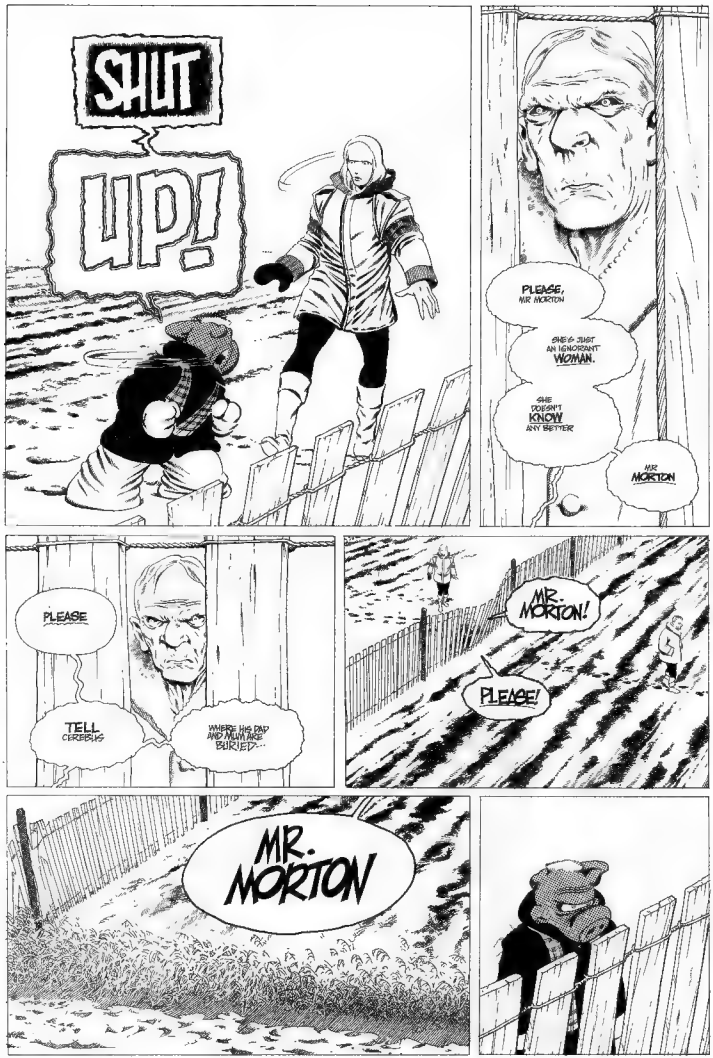
SPOKE AGAIN.

JOSEPH NEVER ASKED FOR NOTHIN'.

JUST LAY ON ZEKE'S CHESTERFIELD 'TIL HE STOPPED BREATH'N.

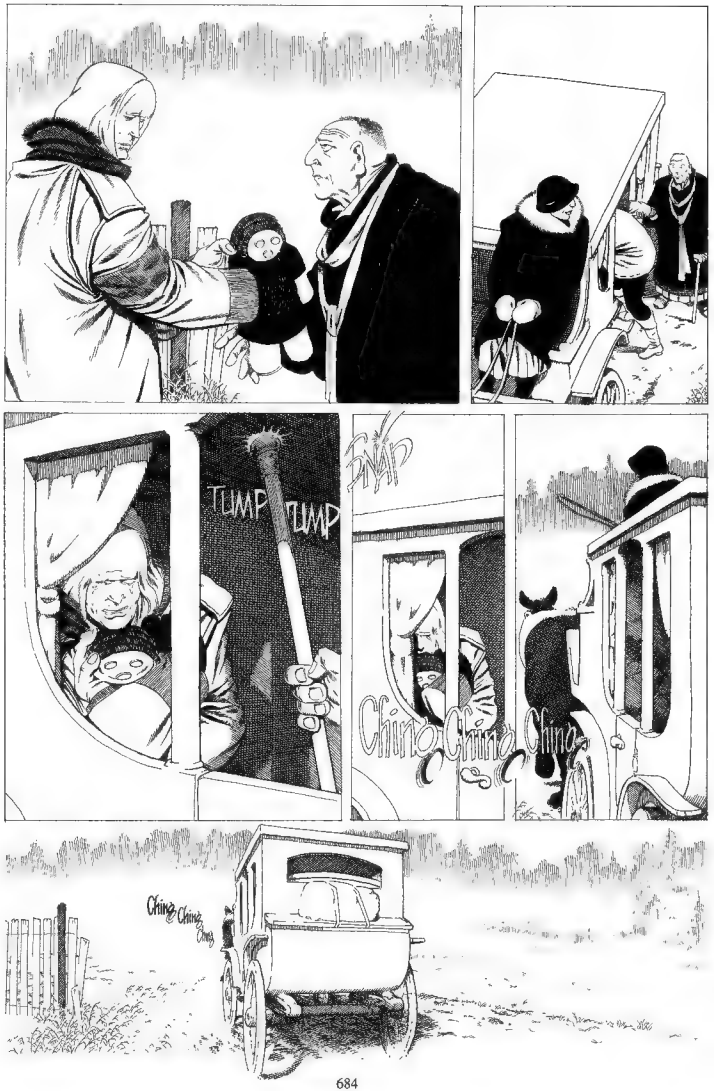
AND THEN ZEKE AND TWO OF JOSEPH'S

FRIENDS
SAW JOSEPH TO HIS FINAL
REST.
IT WASN'T RIGHT.
BUT IT WAS
AS RIGHT
AS IT
COULD
BE
TELL ZEKE,
DID JOSEPH DIE.
ALONE.
BECAUSE YOU WERE,
BUSY.
WITH THIS
HARLOT?
"HARLOT"?!
LISTEN HERE
MISTER- uh MISTER...
WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS!

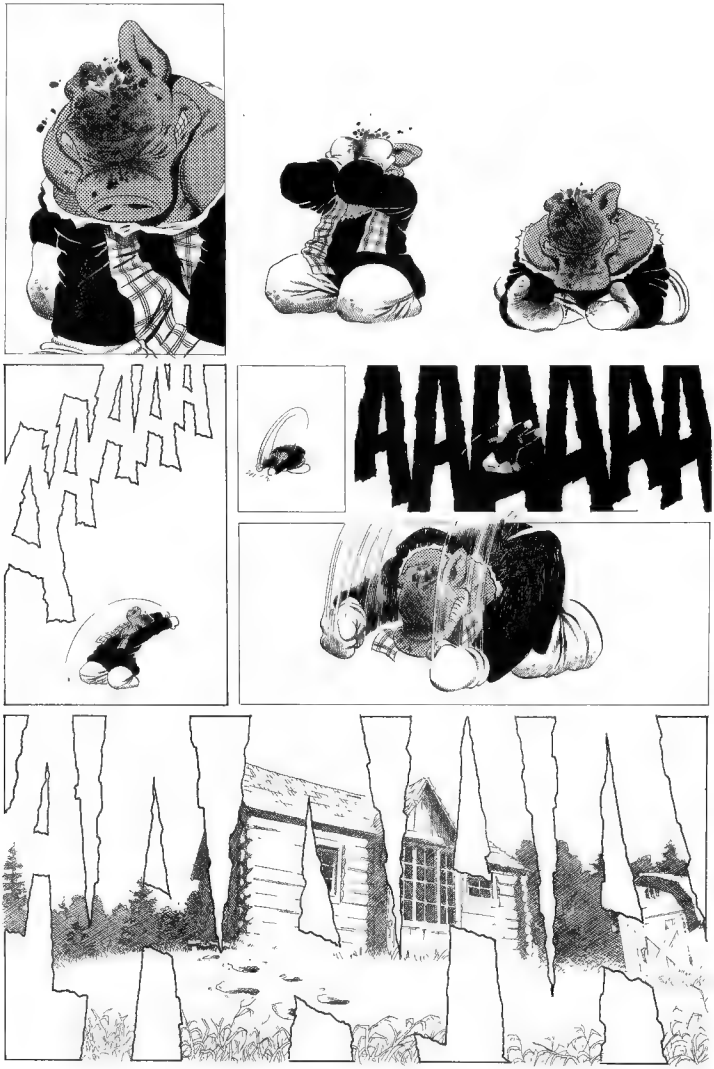

SHUT
UP!
PLEASE, MR MORTON
SHE'S JUST AN IGNORANT WOMAN.
SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER
MR MORTON
PLEASE
TELL CERBERUS
WHERE HIS DAD AND MUM ARE BURIED...
MR. MORTON!
PLEASE!
MR. MORTON

LISTEN...
Chin Ching Ching
I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET
Ching Ching
Chin
BUT I TOLD YOU
WHEN YOU DECIDED TO TURN BACK DOWN SOUTH WITH ME
Ching Ching Ching Ching Ching Ching Ching
GO ON.
I SAID TO YOU
IN THE CARRIAGE
I SAID... 'JUST DON'T BLAME ME
IF YOU DIE LATER ON'
BEAT IT.

SCRAM
Chin


TUMP TUMP
SNAP
Chink Chink Chink
Chink Chink Chink

RIP


AAHAAA

TANGENT

If the ensuing seems unduly harsh to male and female feminists (which it will *since everything* besides *complete and abject* surrender to *feminism strikes male and female feminists as unduly harsh) there is, perhaps, some small feminist consolation to be had from the fact that, with the completion of "Tangent," I intend to "have done" with the subject of gender and gender "issues" entirely: in much the same way that* The Cerebus Guide to Self-Publishing *constituted my "hail and farewell" to the subject of self-publishing. As with the* Guide, *"Tangent" represents a summing up of my conclusions about a subject which has occupied my attentions for a period of time and which I have resolved for myself, in my own way and to my own satisfaction (and which I am now pleased to put behind me so that I can pursue other areas of interest to me).*

PRE-TANGENT

Carol West resigned her position as Aardvark-Vanaheim's Administrative Assistant (a very fancy feminist name for a very plain secretarial position: mea culpa, mea maxima culpa, *and I don't intend that ironically) after "inputting" a first draught of "Tangent" parts one and two. Her resignation, far from being either a surprise or a disheartening event, to me, seemed just the latest example of feminism undermining its own 30-year long campaign to be taken seriously as a societal movement by (literally) getting offended and leaving in a huff whenever it encounters any viewpoint which does not represent absolute capitulation to its own. At some point—whether the intervening period is measured in days, weeks, months, years, decades or centuries—At Some Point, feminism will, I am sure, at long last be forced to face a number of hard questions about its total lack of intellectual foundation. Carol West can get offended and leave, but the hard questions remain. My feminist readers can roll their eyes theatrically, but the hard questions remain. They can exhale noisily, but the hard questions remain. They can snort derisively, but the hard questions remain. They can, collectively, turn their backs, but the hard questions remain.*

In the arena of intellectual opinion, when it comes to these hard questions, asking Dave Sim, "Why do you hate women so much?" is irrelevant when my subject is feminism's lack of sound intellectual footing. It is irrelevant whether I hate women. It is irrelevant whether I love women. It is irrelevant whether I consider women in any emotional context whatsoever, just as—when my question is directed towards feminism's lack of sound intellectual footing—it is irrelevant whether I hate ice cream, whether I love ice cream or whether I consider ice cream in any emotional context whatsoever, All That Is Relevant, when the issue at hand is my contention that feminism lacks a sound intellectual foundation, All That Is Relevant, Germane and/or Pertinent is the intellectual foundation—or lack of same—upon which feminism rests.

Walking away is not relevant. Rolling one's eyes theatrically is not relevant. Snorting derisively is not relevant.

It seems to me that after thirty years, all thinking people must be coming to realize that these reactions—far from constituting a defence *of feminism—lead, inescapably, in the contrary direction: lead, inescapably, to the fact that feminism* has no *sound intellectual foundation: that, in fact, feminism has only its own rapidly dwindling momentum and the sheer gall, chutzpah, nerve and inherent unreasoning contrariness of its perpetrators as its foundation, as its sole line of defence, as its single* raison d'etre *and as its solitary rationale.*

Anyway, this is how I began:

TANGENT I

Having dispensed with the Hemingways (how many of you still think that Mary Hemingway—despite having murdered her husband—is a "strong, independent woman and a good role model for wives everywhere"? Show of hands. Almost all of you. Big surprise.) I now prepare for the next complete waste of my own time and energy: my promised "last word on gender" entitled "Tangent".

* * * * * * *

All *males* (as opposed to *men)* sound like social workers and/or voodoo profession wannabe's, so it came as no surprise—when the fellow turned to me and asked "Where do you think your ideas about women *come* from?"—that the saccharine undertone was there ("When we share our experiences with others, it helps us to get in touch with our innermost feelings and emotions").

"Where do you think your ideas about women *come* from?"

Two things:

Foremost, they originate from the research that I did for *Mothers & Daughters*. Not the voluminous reading of everything from nurse novels to voodoo pop (*My Mother, My Self; Our Bodies, Our Selves; Our House-pets, Our Selves,* et al) to Women's Studies ["...and after all correlatives of the societal norm have been maximized through the intuitive, the nurturing and spiritually nutritive, through the hard-won maturation of our collective emotive *a priori* dispensation-construct: regarded (herein) not as the mere imitative imposition of the aforementioned "will to power" (the now universally discredited patriarchal model) but a new model founded upon, to reiterate, the intuitive, the nurturing and spiritually nutritive, pursuant *to,* but not inextricably bound *within* the *ad hoc* antecedent culture and/or cultural imperative blah blah blah"]. All I got out of *that* research, I already knew: a) women want to be raped by rich, muscular, handsome doctors b) women are completely self-absorbed and, thus, see themselves in everything around them and c) femi-

nism is no different from communism in that all of its literature is founded upon convoluted syntax, bafflegab and academic jargon which paints a false (albeit attractive) picture of an unattainable utopia which can be achieved—*easily*!—by everyone in the world simply and simultaneously (in both feminist and communist literature the "crux point" is invariable) changing their basic nature overnight. Acknowledging (*grudgingly*) the small likelihood of so sweeping a societal change coming about on its own, "a rigorous and thorough program of (communist and feminist literature share an admiration for the euphemism) *re-education* may be called for." That is, all "non-comrades, non-fellow travellers" must be subjected to unrelenting political indoctrination, sloganeering and brainwashing ("A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!").

(I sense that my situation with feminism is comparable to that of pre-1989 writers faced with the task of "debunking" communism: how extensive, lengthy and intricate an explanation can one pursue in explaining that two-plus-two do *not* equal five, but in *fact*, equal four without—even in one's own view—treading well within the lunatic borders of the excruciatingly self-evident? I suspect that feminism, like communism, must be allowed to "strut and fret its hour upon the stage," "playing out" its manifold absurdities until even the most ardent and most wilfully ignorant "true believer" comes to realize—as has happened with communism—that "there is no *there*, there.")

No. The research which most contributed to my "ideas about women" was the series of informal interviews I conducted with mothers and daughters—with mothers about their daughters, with daughters about their mothers, with daughters about their daughters, with mothers about their mothers. It was really the first time in my adult life that I spoke to women who I found physically unattractive and the first time I spoke to women with any motive besides getting them into bed. In the case of the *attractive* women that I interviewed, it was a guarantee that I was *not* going to get them into bed—"mothers and daughters," as subject, existing at the opposite end of the conversational spectrum from those topics which lead to sex—and (*knowing* that) for the first time in my adult life the intellectual, reasoning, "writerly" part of my mind was engaged when talking to women.

For the first while, I couldn't figure out what was wrong.

I'm usually a "quick study" when it comes to a given subject—the "high altitude mapping" as Alan Moore called it in our "Dialogue: From Hell" a few years back. It's really what writing is made up of. Ask the hard questions, narrow the list of possibilities and work with the resulting template. As it turns out, nothing in the feminist psyche conforms to this model. All women are feminists and all feminist evidence is anecdotal. Ask them a question and they will tell you a little story. Ask them a question to clarify what you *infer* is the *point* of the story and they will tell you another story. When they *do* attempt to draw a conclusion or a larger inference *from* an anecdote they will often ask, "Does that make any sense?" And the answer, of course is (almost invariably) no, it doesn't make any sense. And since I wasn't trying to get any of them into bed, I would *say* so (if you're trying to get them into bed, you always say "yes, that makes perfect sense" or manufacture some sensible interpretation that has nothing to do with what they said). *Telling* them that they don't make sense, I found, is like telling them that not only do they *not* win the trip to Hawaii, they don't even get the Samsonite luggage. They become forlorn and uncommunicative. That was when I realized that it was impossible to engage them on an intellectual, reasoning, "writerly" level—that is in a purely matter-of-fact fashion. I had to *act*, had to *portray* myself as being happy, sympathetic, interested and cheerful in order to maintain a level of…

…I don't know what you would call it. It wasn't communication in any meaningful sense of the term as I understand it. It was a kind of "emotional badminton." *I* acted happy, sympathetic, interested and cheerful and then it was *her* turn to act happy, sympathetic, interested and cheerful and then it was *my* turn, etc. She might accidentally say something interesting where I could, with sincerity, say that I found what she had just said interesting. This temporarily escalated the level of her cheerfulness but, alas, that is all that it did: whatever was being said ranking a very distant second to maintaining and escalating the level of cheerfulness. A very, *very* distant second. I realized that this is where the "henhouse cacophony" originates. If "communication" within a group of women is working properly (as women see "working properly") everyone should be talking faster and faster and faster and in a higher and higher musical range—either *portraying* themselves or *being* (the two states being deemed interchangeable in the female world) cheerful, more cheerful, "cheerfulest"—until, maximum cheerfulness having been achieved, a glass breaks or something.

That was when I realized that women are emotion-based beings. "Once a thing is seen, it can't be *unseen*." I gave a couple of more tries at relationships after that (a year-and-a-half and three-and-a-half years respectively) but it was really like solving a "brain teaser" *after* someone has given you the answer. You know—one of those puzzles where you are supposed to "make three triangles by connecting the dots using only seven lines" (or whatever). It can drive you insane for a month, but if you look in the back of the book, or if someone shows you how it's solved or you figure it out on your own, there is little entertainment value to be had in endlessly drawing those same seven lines to make those same three triangles. Likewise, there is little in the way of intellectual value to be derived from *revisiting*—either mentally or "in person"—the simple fact (once discovered), that women are emotion-based beings and that (consequently) any female-centred or female-originated political movement—more precisely, "political" "movement"—will lack sound intellectual footing. Hence, my billing of "Tangent" as "my last word on gender."

Women are emotion-based beings.

One of the spill-overs from *Mothers & Daughters* into *Rick's Story* was Viktor Davis telling Rick, "Just be happy every waking minute of your life and you've got her for as long as you want her." Which was really a perverse way for Viktor Davis to put it. It's valid advice, but the "every minute of your life" was unnecessarily arduous

(which Viktor knew but, in his wilfully cruel way, thought he would add as a little "going away" present for Rick). It could be more appropriately phrased as: "If things aren't going right, just act cheerful and say things in a musical tone of voice and everything will be fine." Which they will but, in my own experience, I found that that was no way to live. But even as I found that that was no way to live, I recognized there was no *other* way to live in the context. With an emotion-based being, your only choices are to narcotize her with a steady stream of cheerful, musical expression or manufacture a chaotic mixture of emotional portrayals to "wake her up" ("awake" being a purely relative term, of course, in referring to emotion-based beings). You can *try* being sensible and reasonable but all you're going to get back is an emotion-based portrayal of sense and reason having nothing to do with sense and reason. An emotion-based being just attempts to *reflect* and/or *portray* what little emotion she can discern in sense and reason ("*sombre*," "*serious*," "*earnest*," "non-*musical*") and attaches the portrayal to an arbitrary stream of musical vocalizations having nothing to do with the subject at hand. This invariably provokes extreme impatience in the *non*-emotion-based being, to whose impatient expressions the *emotion*-based being will invariably respond: "Why are you getting so *angry*?" Impatience is not a *happy* emotion, but an *identifiable* one for an emotion-based being: "I was singing your sombre, serious, earnest, non-musical song with you and now you're *angry*. Why don't you just sing a *cheerful* song instead so we can both be *happy*?" To the emotion-based being, this makes perfect sense.

(All lengthy and thorough explanations being digressional, at this point the fellow asked, "Is this like that book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*?" To his credit, he hadn't actually read the book. Neither have I. "There's always a danger with those things," I said. "I was in a bookstore and I saw the cover of the sequel, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus, Children Are From Heaven*." The fellow nodded readily. However, as there were a number of women eavesdropping in the vicinity, I thought it worth adding for *their* benefit, "If a man lowers himself to a woman's level of fairy-tale metaphor—I mean, self-evidently men are *not* from Mars and women are *not* from Venus—women will invariably drag the discussion over into something comparable to *Children are From Heaven*, smiling and chuckling and feeling really good about themselves. 'Children are From Heaven. Now we're really getting somewhere.'" The fellow nodded impatiently.)

Anyway, I just found that I couldn't live that way. A woman is going to do whatever makes her cheerful at the moment and that, in my experience, is the extent of her perception of ethics. In order to maintain a relationship with an emotion-based being it is necessary to be cheerful about anything that makes her cheerful. Coupled with a "woman's right to choose" as central ethic—or, rather, "ethic"—this involves a wide and variegated spectrum of feminist actions and behaviours and opinions. At one time, I rated sex as being very, very, *very* high on my list of life's pleasures. Ultimately, for myself, the spiritual toll which was exacted by maintaining a rictus grin in the face of all feminist actions, behaviours and opinions across the full range of that spectrum made the price of sex *too* high—which, considering how highly I once rated sex as a pleasure is really saying something, I think.

[I discovered, through celibacy and the avoidance of masturbation that sexual desire is a lot like a rash. If you keep "scratching it" you make it worse and, thus, "scratching it" comes to seem like an urgent, toppermost of the poppermost, central necessity in your life. If you learn to leave your *penis* alone, I discovered, your penis will learn to leave *you* alone.]

This dovetailed with the "second source" in answering "Where do you think your ideas about women *come* from?": my own decision to alternate periods of intentional celibacy (as opposed to "not getting laid") with periods of monogamous sexual activity and semi-monogamous sexual activity. Having gone back and forth between the two states over the course of a decade, I can state unequivocally that celibate Dave Sim sees reality more clearly than sexually-active Dave Sim (who wilfully hypnotized himself into seeing the world in a manifestly *untrue* way and persuaded himself that feminist lies were true, that many feminist lies contained elements of truth, that feminist lies were not wholly untruthful). Surrendering an accurate perception of reality for a world of fairy-tale falsehoods was part of the high price of sex, a price I was no longer prepared to pay.

I got tired of Believing Five Impossible Things Before Breakfast.

(Odd to say *that* one out loud for the first time.)

"For instance?" the fellow asked.

"Well, take Government-Funded Daycare," I said, "a central plank in the platform of the fairy-tale world emotion-based beings inhabit—their belief/feeling that it is the responsibility of government to raise children. Feminists and their hollowed-out ventriloquist puppet husbands...

(...please bear with my use of that...*admittedly*... prejudicial phrase until I've had the chance to elaborate...)

...have universally adopted Government-Funded Daycare in principle. Not only is it fiscally *irresponsible and* an inherently unfair use of public funds (benefiting only those mothers who choose to work), it is diametrically opposed to a central tenet of any civilized society: that children are the responsibility of their parents to rear. When was the last time you even heard it described as '*rearing* children'? 'You *rear* children. You *raise* hogs.' What the feminists and their ventriloquist puppet husbands are talking about doing with Government-Funded Daycare is *raising* children as if they were a herd of interchangeable swine. No surprise coming from a gender which has no ethics, no scruples, no sense of right and wrong. Just hand the kids over to the voodoo profession, social workers, government bean counters and go along with whatever happens to be the Ethical Consensus du Jour. 'Raise' boys to be girls, 'raise' girls to be boys.'"

How?

"Well, I'm sure *I* don't know. I'm just Porky/Petunia's *mother*. They have *experts* who know how to 'raise' boys to be girls and 'raise' girls to be boys. I'll let *them* decide. Listen, I'd love to chat about this, but I have a meeting with a client at 9:00 and I'm going to be late as it is."

This connected quite neatly with an article I had read in that morning's *Globe & Mail* which said that some

astronomical percentage of parents thought it was the responsibility of public schools to teach sexual morality.

I mean, that one just *stinks* of feminism.

"Homosexuality is just another lifestyle choice, completely normal." "Homosexuality isn't a choice, it's a genetic reality." Oh. Okay. So (leaving aside the obvious fact that those two realities contradict each other) [my own view is that *all* sexuality is a matter of choice since it is not a life-sustaining necessity: what or whom you have sex with—or whether you have sex at all—is optional. I would not be here if it weren't for sex, true, but if I *choose* never to have sex, I am *still* "*here*"], when do you want to start teaching this lifestyle choice/genetic reality in the classroom? What age? Six? Seven? Ten? Twelve? And *how* do you want to teach it? Bring in a couple of dykes and a couple of interior decorators to talk to a bunch of third graders?

"Well, I'm sure *I* don't know. I'm just Porky/Petunia's *mother*. They have *experts* on cultural diversity and alternative lifestyles now, don't they? I'll let *them* decide. Listen, I'd love to chat about this, but I have a meeting with a client at 10:30 and I'm going to be late as it is."

[This is actually "jumping the gun" a little on Tangent II's examination of the feminist-homosexualist axis, but suffice to say that their feminist-homosexualist consensus view of teaching homosexuality in the schools seems to be a) it's a very good idea and b) men are wrong. It is difficult—actually impossible—to discern any agreement beyond that point].

But, this is way too many words for our CNN "Get To The Point News" Information Age, isn't it? So, let's distil Daycare and Government-Funded Daycare into short and concise Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast form:

1. A mother who works a full-time job and delegates to strangers the raising of her children eight hours a day, five days a week does just as good a job as a mother who hand-rears her children full time.

2. It makes great sense for the government to pay 10 to 15,000 dollars a year to fund a daycare space for a child so its mother—who pays *perhaps* 2,000 dollars in taxes—can be a contributing member of society.

All you husbands and daycare daddies are just nodding like crazy. "Makes sense to me, Dave." "Gotta have it. Government-Funded Daycare. No way around that. Gotta have it." "A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!"

For the benefit of the *rest* of my readership, I decided to compose a partial list of Impossible Things To Believe Before Breakfast (jotted down over the course of an hour while working on a *Cerebus* page—I figured a dozen or so would get my point across).

I'll just continue the numbering from our Daycare entries.

3. A woman's doctor has more of a valid claim to participate in the decision to abort a fetus than does the father of that fetus.

4. So long as a woman makes a decision after consulting with her doctor, she is incapable of making an unethical choice.

[*I was going to allow the Impossible Things to stand alone and "hatch out" however they might in each inidividual reader's mind once they had been planted—to mix a metaphor. However, in the aftermath of Carol West's resignation that seems unnecessarily naive, given the wilfulness with which the hard questions are ignored in our society. So, here, interposed, is my more elaborate opinion on abortion:*

The far larger question, to me, is one of "*what God therefore hath joyned together let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9).* (This, so far as I know, being the *only* genuinely Biblical quotation—the Synoptic Jesus again, *caveat emptor*—in the otherwise wholly and completely secular Christian wedding ceremony is a major reason that I have no objection to gay marriages. I'm reasonably certain that marriage is a completely pagan, completely female invention no more sacred as an institution than are feminism or communism. It is, after all, called Matrimony and not Patrimony, isn't it? I mean, duh.) It seems to me utterly foolish to ascribe virtually *any* of our society's haphazard—*literally* "catch as catch can"—marriage unions to our Creator. In my view, an omnipotent and omniscient being simply wouldn't have that lousy a track record.

Pregnancy, it seems to me, is an altogether different matter.

Inexplicable as it is that *some* acts of coitus produce offspring while others do not (despite the best efforts of medical science to establish irrefutable "laws" of cause-and-effect) it seems to me that here, God's hand is very much in evidence and "*what God hath joyned together let not man put asunder*"—sperm and egg, fertilized egg and uterine wall—very much applicable. If abortion *is*, as the feminists insist, a matter of a woman having control over her own body, then I think a public demonstration of a woman *willing* herself to become un-pregnant or *willing* her fertilized egg to detach itself from her uterine wall would settle the issue once and for all. At which point I would happily go along with the secular-humanist consensus view.

But, of course, a woman no more has control over her reproductive functions—apart from abstinence—than she has over the number of hairs growing on her head or the colour of her eyes.

Thus, to me, "a woman's right to choose" constitutes little more than an imbecilic paraphrase of "free will". That is, we are all, by the grace of God, free to choose. That is what free will is. We can choose to commit murder, we can choose to steal, we can choose to commit adultery. The underpinning of the life of the God-fearing individual is that there is a price to be paid—sometimes in this world, sometimes in the world to come, sometimes in both—for choosing incorrectly. The ritual sacrifice of babies is well-documented among the pagan peoples named in the Torah and is, irrefutably, an abomination in the eyes of God.

Is abortion in the same category?

As a global civilization, here in the first nanoseconds of the 21st century the present consensus would appear to be "yes, no and/or maybe". Half of us believe that abortion is in no way comparable. Half of us believe that it is. To me, all that is relevant is God's opinion and—since medical abortion evolved well after the death of God's Last Messenger and Seal of Prophets, Muhammad (peace be upon him) in 632 CE—that is unknown to us. It is unknown to me and it is unknown to you and it is unknown to Pope John Paul II, his predecessors and his successors. Likewise with God's opinion on condoms (ribbed, coloured *or* plain) and birth control pills.

On the Last Day when all is made plain to us, I would not be terribly surprised—from my present vantage point of self-admitted absolute ignorance—to find that abortions and birth control will be indictable offences for some and non-indictable offences for others, based on God's superior and perfect knowledge of each individual... just as I would not be terribly surprised to find that abortion and birth control will be deemed murder, High Crimes against one's own soul and (far worse) the soul of another...*or* to find that abortion and birth control are considered lesser transgressions against one's own soul: more comparable to, say, smoking than to, say, murder. Genuine faith in God, it seems to me, brings one face-to-face with the profound level of one's own ignorance about what is right and what is wrong, post-632 CE. The fact that the various church hierarchies refuse to acknowledge their *own* ignorance in no way alters my own belief that we are *all* ignorant in these areas. But, the bottom line, to me is a) we won't know until the Last Day and b) "a woman's right to choose" contributes nothing to the debate.

In my own sexually-active days, I found the idea of "a woman's right to choose" to be more than a little "ethically convenient". Had any of the women I had had sex with gotten pregnant (none did, so far as I know), I could just take the secular-humanist "high road" of saying that I believed in "a woman's right to choose" thus (theoretically anyway) allowing her to assume whatever "karmic debt" or "spiritual burden" results from having an abortion while, on my own part, "escaping" with just the financial burden of a few hundred dollars for the cost of the operation. Even in my secular-humanist days it seemed just a little too, as I say, "ethically convenient" considering what was actually involved: the irresponsible *initiation* of a human life followed by the equally irresponsible (to me) *eradicating* of that human life. Two wrongs don't make a right, at the point of greatest reduction. It seemed to me a double ethical pitfall and, no, I don't blame women for that. Women have as natural an affinity for medical science as they had for its progenitor, magic. If there is something that women can make use of that, in their view, will provide them with immediate tactical gratification or relief from anxiety, they will make use of it and then welcome any voodoo-profession/feminist ideology band-aid assistance in rationalizing away their (I think, natural) feelings of guilt—so long as the assistance/rationalizing comes "after the fact". It is, in my view, part of a man's ethical obligation to his own soul and to his Creator to endeavour to be (or become) sufficiently wary of this female trait and for men to not allow their penises to lead them down specific unethical paths where a man's own fate in this world and possibly the next becomes "bound up" with those disposed (*pre*disposed?) to believe in these sorts of "ethical conveniences". In saying that, I no more believe that women are to blame in *any* way for those occasions when I allowed my own penis to lead me down specific unethical paths than, as an example, cigarettes are to blame for the fact that, a year and a half after quitting smoking, I still want to smoke a cigarette. It was *my* choice to smoke my first cigarette at the age of eleven and it was *my* choice to smoke every cigarette I smoked thereafter.

We now return you to your regularly-scheduled list of Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast, already in progress:]

5. A car with two steering wheels, two gas pedals and two brakes drives more efficiently than a car with one steering wheel, one gas pedal and one brake which is why marriage should always be an equal partnership.

6. It is absolutely necessary for women to be allowed to join or participate fully in any gathering place for men, just as it is absolutely necessary that there be "women only" environments from which men are excluded.

7. Because it involves taking jobs away *from* men and giving them *to* women, affirmative action makes for a fairer and more just society.

8. It is important to have lower physical standards for women firepersons and women policepersons so that, one day, half of all firepersons and policepersons will be women, thus more effectively protecting the safety of the public.

9. Affirmative action at colleges and universities needs to be maintained now that more women than men are being enrolled, in order to keep from giving men an unfair advantage academically.

10. Having ensured that there is no environment for men where women don't belong (see no. 6) it is important to have zero tolerance of any expression or action which any woman might regard as sexist to ensure greater freedom for everyone.

11. Only in a society which maintains a level of 95% of alimony and child support being paid *by* men *to* women can men and women be considered as equals.

12. An airline stewardess who earned $20,000 a year at the time that she married a baseball player earning $6 million a year is entitled, in the event of a divorce, to $3 million for each year of the marriage

and probably more.

13. A man's opinions on how to rear and/or raise a child are invalid because he is not the child's mother. . However, his financial obligation is greater because no woman gets pregnant by herself.

14. Disagreeing with any of these statements makes you anti-woman and/or a misogynist.

So, how did you do, fellas? Don't worry if there were a few statements there that you disagreed with. Just use a few of these handy feminist obfuscations like: "Well, of course, these issues are very, very complicated," Or "While I see what Dave is saying, I have to say that I agree more than I disagree," Or "Of course, these issues are all 'works-in-progress'. I'd like to hear a few more opinions before I make up my mind," Or "There might be *some* inequality but compared to the centuries of women being oppressed it seems a small price to pay temporarily until it all gets worked out." If you notice that *none* of these obfuscations has *anything* to do with *any* of the statements just keep repeating "A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!" until you stop thinking and/or start to feel better.

Although I have given the husbands a hard time here, I am not without sympathy, having been one myself once. Husbands, it seems to me, are caught between the Rock of Feminism and the Hard Place of their own marriages: that is, capitulate or leave. "Deadbeat Dads," to me, is a skewed feminist perception. It is not that men are *deserting* their families in many cases, so much as it is that they are being *driven from* their families by the pressure to Believe Five Impossible Things Before Breakfast, to capitulate, that is, to Feminist Ideology, to submit to the Orwellian imperative to believe that Feminist Lies are the Truth and that Masculine Truths are Lies. Reason can't win in an argument with Emotion. Reason can capitulate to Emotion or Reason can leave. In either case Emotion, being without any sound intellectual foundation, will always find itself fully justified in its every action.

For feminists, for wives, for women, for Emotion-based beings, it is a win/win/win/win situation. Either her husband a) capitulates to her views and, thus, places himself and his assets under her jurisdiction or b) *portrays himself to her* as having capitulated to her views and, thus, places himself and his assets under her jurisdiction or c) *removes himself* from her jurisdiction and surrenders half of his assets to her voluntarily or d) removes himself from her jurisdiction and is forced to surrender half of his assets to her by the courts (Did you hear about the new Divorced Barbie? She comes with half of Ken's stuff).

It is ridiculous to discuss equality between the genders as anything but a feminist hallucination until women agree to surrender their "right" to alimony. Of course women will never surrender alimony because they are not, contrary to their very vocal protestations, equal to men. A *percentage* of the female population is capable of providing, for themselves, the basic necessities of life. But it is a *small percentage,* indeed, when compared with the female population which relies on the largesse of boyfriends, husbands, ex-husbands, fathers and/or the government...

[These hidden, obfuscated transactions—the husband who finances the start-up of the wife's boutique business, the fat alimony settlement which serves the same purpose, the father who co-signs his daughter's car loan or mortgage, who pays all or part of the down-payment—compel self-*deluding* women to believe that they are self-*reliant* feminists]

...and *of that small percentage a still smaller percentage* of the female population is capable of generating *surplus* wealth—that is, creating employment, creating excess capital which provides not only for *themselves* but for *others.* That *still smaller percentage* exists in numbers sufficient only to make possible banner headlines and full colour photo-spreads of anecdotal success stories in *Cosmo* and *People* magazines: anecdotal success stories which are evasive of a central reality: that for every much-celebrated, much-heralded female success story in a given profession, discipline, art or business, there are *hundreds*—if not *thousands*—of male success stories in that same profession, discipline, art or business which are *un*heralded and *un*celebrated: which are "merely" the fiscal foundation of our society and the source of our society's—and most feminists'—material wealth.

If this is false, then women are self-sustaining. If women are self-sustaining, then alimony is unnecessary and must be eliminated.

If this is true, then equality between the genders is an hallucination, a cul de sac of delusional societal "thinking".

Women are the chauvinists, not men. Nicholas Chauvin was a devoted soldier and overzealous supporter of Napoleon Bonaparte and all things French. Chauvinism is defined as "*Unreasoning* (italics mine) attachment to one's race, group, etc." To celebrate, herald and champion *one* woman *publicly* for doing what *hundreds* and *thousands* of men are doing in *obscurity* is chauvinism: *unreasoning* attachment to female achievement out of proportion to its contribution to society, just as Chauvin's devotion to Napoleon and all things French was drastically out of proportion to the limited importance of Napoleon, the limited importance of the French.

TANGENT II

In the second of my five "Tangents," I'd like to address what I see as the misapprehensions of those strangest of political bedfellows, the feminist-homosexualist axis.

I think it was a combination of emotional empathy for societal underdogs and short-sighted tactical blundering on the part of feminists which impelled them to champion the cause of homosexualists in tandem with their own. I think that homosexualists figured—as any thoroughly marginalized socio-political wallflower would have—"Just say 'yes' to anyone who can get us out on the dance floor, girls."

If it was scarcely a match made in heaven, the two constituencies were, at least, "well met": with a shared unwillingness to perceive any reality larger than their own

anecdotal prejudices, a shared tendency to deify emotions and feelings as the totems most central to their respective tribal groupings and a preternatural ability to simply ignore any view or opinion which did not reinforce those prejudices and which did not kowtow to those totems.

A certain amount of blame for the unholy feminist-homosexualist axis (my gut instinct informs me) fairly attaches itself to Gore Vidal and his—as I discussed earlier—pioneering view that everyone is bisexual by nature and that what is perceived to be "homosexuality" or "heterosexuality" are the "luck of the draw" results of what behaviourists (good voodoo professionals all) define as "imprinting". That is (now, promise you won't laugh), that the natural instinct which impels a newly-hatched duckling to identify the first large, moving shape it sees as "mother" is the same instinct which leads us to our initial sexual experiences and, thus, leads us to believe that we are "homosexualists" or "heterosexualists".

There—but for the grace of Barbi Benton's 1969 *Playboy* pictorial—go I (as it were).

Now, whether this notion of "interchangability as norm" originated with the homosexualists, the feminists or (as I say) Gore Vidal, it found in the 1960s and 70s nutrient-rich soil in which to further itself as a Large Societal Misapprehension. But, whereas Mr. Vidal (I believe) fashioned said notion as a means of "tactical seduction" (pretty, weak-minded young men found "fence-sitting" could be persuaded—in contradiction of their own best and most natural masculine instincts—that it is more natural to "swing both ways") ("just this once" being, I would suppose, rather more than adequately suited to Mr. Vidal's presumably...eclectic...purposes): I believe that the "interchangeability underpinning" was appropriated by the "ladies" for "doings" that were to prove a good deal "darker" in the long-term. That is, it was appropriated for the advancement of the idiosyncratic feminist view that the *genders* are interchangeable and that all distinctions between male and female are imposed by an evil patriarchal society which must be overthrown. Of course, like any counter-conspiracy of such magnitude, once you get started there is always something else that needs doing. You begin with the subversion of language, the eradication of gender-specific nouns and one thing just leads to another. Counter-indoctrination—the feminist/communist-style program of re-education/brainwashing—must needs assert itself in the very earliest collectivist environments: *kindergarten* is too *late* if the Workers'—er—Feminist Paradise on Earth is to be achieved in our lifetime. The feminists began to "ramp up" nursery school, pre-nursery school and pre-pre-nursery school. The entertainment field and the arts community needed to be co-opted, designers of androgynous fashions pressed into service.

[Long accustomed to blaming the Patriarchal boogeyman for *imposing* near-anorexic, near-skeletal standards of "beauty" and "fashion" upon their naturally curvaceous selves, I think the "ladies" could more fairly indict their own unholy alliance with the homosexualists and the (all exceptions duly noted) predominantly gay fashion designers. Said gay fashion designers, in their turn, are more than entitled to use the Nuremberg defence that they "were just following orders" in developing and sustaining an androgynous "look" along the pirated Vidalian political line: if we are all bisexualists by nature then, presumably, whatever "look" arouses gay fashion designers in pretty young *males* should (all bisexual realities being equal) be the same "look" which arouses men when they look at pretty young *women*. Such is not the case (if the men I know are anything to go by) but there *is* a certain guilty pleasure to be derived in watching women starving themselves to death in the name of their own misbegotten absolutist ideology.]

If the early push to equip all men with purses was a failure ("Men wear purses in *Europe*," one feminist interjected, a hint of desperation in her tone, when I mentioned the subject socially), still virtually all of us in my generation, men *and* women, were—and are—wearing jeans of one description or another. Such major victories, however, are Pyrrhic ashes in the mouths of those for whom ideology is an absolute. If "gender interchangeability" is the hypothesis then there can be no rest until all societal fashions resemble those of the various *Star Trek* pyjamas-as-street-wear incarnations: interchangeability must be *total*.

One of the earliest bastions to fall (and which is still in the hands of the People's Revolutionary Government of Gender Interchangeability) was Academe. I believe that Gore Vidal alluded to the conquest—however obliquely—in the closing paragraphs of his essay "Edmund Wilson: This Critic and This Gin and These Shoes" (*New York Review of Books*, September 25, 1980):

> *But Wilson was quite aware that "things" in themselves are not enough. Professor Edel quotes from Wilson's Princeton lecture: "no matter how thoroughly and searchingly we may have scrutinized works of literature from the historical and biographical point of view...we must be able to tell the good from the bad, the first-rate from the second-rate. We shall not otherwise write literary criticism at all."*
>
> *We do not, of course, write literary criticism at all now. Academe has won the battle in which Wilson fought so fiercely on the other side. Ambitious English teachers (sic!) now invents systems that have nothing to do with literature or life but everything to do with those games that must be played in order for them to rise in the academic bureaucracy. Their works are empty indeed. But then, their works are not meant to be full. They are to be taught, not read. The long dialogue has broken down. Fortunately, as Flaubert pointed out, the worst thing about the present is the future. One day there will be no*...But I have been asked not to give the game away. Meanwhile, I shall drop a single hint: Only construct! (emphasis mine)

Reading between the lines, I think, in one sense or another, after they had misappropriated his "interchangeability thesis," representatives of the mad little band of checkers-playing Ivy League tacticianettes (the 'type" perhaps best exemplified by Hilary Rodham Antoinette) took it upon themselves to—somewhat gleefully, I'm sure—keep Mr. Vidal abreast of their "progress" in getting everything "all mixed up" along what they perceived—in their own addle-pated female way—to be the

lines of his own ideology of interchangeability.

What heady days those must have been! Nothing but patriarchal gravestones as far as the eye could see, as easily tipped over as a sleeping cow! No feminist track record to defend! It tastes good! Other women are doing it! Who cares? (A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose! A woman's right to choose!)

"Only construct!"

Sincere advice or sabotage through reverse psychology? I mean, it's *both*. So meticulous a student of human history, so scrupulous a scholar of historical times and tides as Gore Vidal would recognize that—if the feminist inversion of society was to have the merest chance of success—it would need to be *grafted onto* the existing body politic and nurtured *in tandem* with it. With a great deal of care and a little bit of luck (well, okay, a *lot* of luck), the new growth would prove more suited to its environment than that which it was seeking to replace and the "old growth" would expire of its own obsolescent-by-contrast nature and accord. There are any number of examples of this in the supplanting of one form of civilisation by a successor civilisation.

Of course it was probably a matter of months rather than years after Vidal's sage advice to "Only construct!" that Feminism hobbled itself and its chance of success with a severe outbreak of Deconstructionism—the political equivalent of a raging yeast infection that, left unchecked, shows every sign of becoming a terminal cancer. Attempts at remission by defining Deconstructionism as "Politically Correct" only awakened the intelligentsia to the disturbing parallels between feminism and communism, the shared jargon, the wilful disinclination to shape and re-shape an hypothesis out of the best available evidence, but to always—perversely—manufacture and pick-and-choose evidence purely on the basis of its ability to *support* a given hypothesis (the underlying motive, as an example, compelling women to starve themselves to death rather than accept the fact that their body type is different from that of their homosexualist "allies").

Did Vidal count on the fact that women can always be relied upon to do the opposite of what they are advised to do by a man? Was his own horror at the prospect of the Hilary Rodham Plantagenets of this world actually *taking control* the underlying motive in his giving them such an invaluable, irrefutable, best course of action distilled down to two words (and an exclamation point!), *knowing* that they would ignore him and, thus, undo their own totalitarian ambitions through their own fundamental "contrariness"?

I wonder.

I have less frequently run afoul of homosexualist disapprobation than I have that of feminists but on one notable occasion, when I had written that I was "sickened" by the thought of male homosexual acts, I received a letter from a very famous and very talented gay graphic novelist (so far as I know there *is* only *one* gay graphic novelist so the first two guesses don't count) asking me something along the lines of "how dare (I) find what he and his lover do together sickening?"

This is what I mean by the anecdotal prejudices of the feminist-homosexualist axis, their frame of reference narrowed to the limits of their own idiosyncratic and tiny societal reality.

It was not a matter that I had consciously chosen at some point to sit down and persuade myself, "You know, I really must develop within myself a profound physical aversion to what famous-talented-gay-graphic-novelist and his boyfriend do in bed with each other." The aversion *was* there, *is* there, as it is (so far as I know) with most, if not all, heterosexual men having nothing *whatsoever* to do with famous-talented-gay-graphic-novelist *or* his boyfriend as human beings. Had I been inclined to respond, I could very easily have said, "How dare *you* presume to dictate to another person what *is* or *is not* an appropriate, natural physical reaction *within* that person?"

It seems to me that it is typical of the "ists"—communists, feminists and homosexualists—that they genuinely see "re-education" as viable and not a violation, tolerant and not totalitarian and that they have always failed to see—whether it is in their communist or feminist-homosexualist incarnations—that "politically correct" is an oxymoron. It is *only* the totalitarian who sees the goal of politics to be the determination of the One Right Way to Think and it is only the totalitarian who fails to recognize that politics is the vital give-and-take, parry-and-thrust—the *on-going* give-and-take and parry-and-thrust—implied by the existence of contending viewpoints. As an example, *I firmly believe* that feminism is a misguided attempt to raise women above their place, which *I firmly believe* is secondary to that of men. *I firmly believe* that homosexuality—not homosexualists themselves—belongs at the margins of society and behind closed doors. *I firmly believe* that it must be tolerated just as *I firmly believe* it should not be publicly celebrated. "In your face" celebrated, I mean.

But I do not *envision* a world—nor would I *endorse* a world—where the feminist and the homosexualist needed to be "re-educated" or "have their consciousness raised" (or whatever feminist-homosexualist euphemism you prefer for brainwashing, indoctrination and sloganeering) so as to compel them to make their beliefs conform to my beliefs. Nor do I become indignant when my beliefs are challenged. I am more than willing to sharpen and clarify distinctions between my own views and the views of others (as I am doing at considerable length here) and I am always more than content to "agree to disagree," but I confess that it does trouble me a great deal when political *arrivistes* like the homosexualists and the feminists think that what engenders a natural visceral reaction in another human being should—or even *could*—be modified to suit *their* prejudices as to what that reaction—in *their* view—*should* be.

I like to avoid "Nazi analogies" (totalitarian seems preferable to me as a less pejorative term), but when someone appears to imply that *my* reactions, *my* visceral reactions, *my* own thoughts, *my* own interior repercussive awarenesses need to be managed or modified or obliterated, I do, I confess, hear the heavy tread of the jackboot in the back stairwell of my psyche.

Where I most particularly take issue with the feminist-homosexualist axis is with what I see as their mono-

maniacal haste to blur all distinctions between "tolerance" and "celebration" of "alternative" lifestyles. While feminists, in my experience, tend to view themselves as being very much un-shockable "been there, done that" veterans of jaded sexual world-weariness, I beg to differ. When placed alongside the multiplicity of hues which make up the full spectrum of sexual "orientations," the "rainbow" of your average feminists' sexual experiences will (I can practically guarantee) prove positively monochromatic by contrast.

As a civilized person, I am more than willing to tolerate the algolagnist in his or her proper place at the margins of society and behind closed doors. An Algolagnist Pride Parade is another thing entirely.

I am not sure how widespread irrumation and self-irrumation are but I am sure that its devotees are very fond of it. However, my tolerance of their preference does not extend to public demonstrations of it in the food court of my local shopping mall and, no, I do not consider my intransigence on the subject to originate from either bigotry or intolerance.

Purely on an aesthetic level and with a wincing eye on the rapidly aging Baby Boom population, I think the place for geróntophilia is *very* much "out of sight" and *very* much "out of mind".

Scopophilia is, I rather suppose, more universal than not, both in its legal and illegal forms. To the extent that (in the former instance) it has a nearly insatiable need for volunteers on both sides of the equation, I do not think that—in a civilized world—handing out application forms on street corners or soliciting by telephone would be any great improvement on its present place in society.

If my argument here seems insufficient, then let me as quickly and discretely as possible (if discretion is even *possible* under the circumstances) raise the spectre of pre-mortem consent relative to necrophilia: undoubtedly the vilest imaginable form of "estate planning," a genuine test of libertarian absolutism...

...and just one of the many malignant vistas which open before the eyes of the strategically-minded when the tactically-limited begin to advocate and to practice the public *celebration*—rather than the *tolerance*—of "alternative" lifestyles and cultural "diversity".

The very adjective, "alternative," and the very noun, "diversity," are both dangerously open-ended, pregnant with hidden significance and subject to very broad and disastrous future extrapolations—that the tactically-limited feminist-homosexualist axis chooses, persistently, to ignore.

A case presently before the Supreme Court of Canada seems relevant, concerned as it is with whether or not *possession* of child pornography is a crime. Doubtless much taxpayer money will be expended as the Justices wrestle their way through to the conclusion that—while possession of *photographs* or *filmic records* (8 mm., videotape) of *actual* children in states of undress acting or posing in sexual situations with each other or with adults constitutes evidence of the commission of a crime (corruption of the morals of a minor) and that, consequently, said *photographs* and *filmic records* are disqualified as private property—the same cannot be said of *drawings of* or *stories about* entirely *fictitious* children with other *fictitious* children and/or *fictitious* adults.

Repulsive? To be sure. No question about it.

But I think that a close examination of the laws governing the civilized world in our present day will show that *any* attempt to ban *any* kind of creative work ultimately and absolutely fails because our civilized laws dating back to 1066 require that there be a demonstrable danger of *physical* harm before the law can take any action. Certainly, the near universal repulsion that heterosexual men experience in considering the existence of male homosexual pornography has done little to stem the tide of public displays and celebrations of work that would have been universally deemed—even a mere fifty years ago—as depraved: many of Robert Mapplethorpe's more explicit photographs as an example. Feminists relish heterosexual male discomfiture in these situations. They simply revel in it. But, I suspect their empathic emotions are going to take an awful beating when efforts to suppress *imagination-based* child pornography ultimately fail on the same basis which permits the dissemination and possession of homosexual pornography. (*The feminist-led Supreme Court handed down its ruling in January of this year while I was doing final corrections on "Tangent" If anyone is interested in reading my opinion of that ruling, write in. I think the Justices made several fundamental errors that will come back to bite them on their collective feminist asses*)

The point missed by the feminists, I think, is that the slope between *tolerance* and *celebration* is a slippery one, indeed. If there exists a clearly demarcated line—which can be *legally drawn*—between allowing public celebrations of those sexual orientations of which feminists *approve* and *dis*allowing public celebrations of those sexual orientations of which feminists *disapprove*, I would certainly be eager to read it in iron-clad and unassailable legalese. But I am reasonably certain that that line does not exist and can't possibly be made to exist despite the frantic efforts that feminists will, I am sure, bring—much too little, much too late—to the proceedings when the time does come.

Allowing Gay Pride Parades is the "thin end of the wedge" and I think myself safe in saying that creeping incrementalism is the inevitable result of the—however well-intentioned—blundering of short-sighted "logic of the next step" tacticians and tacticianettes.

This danger posed by creeping incrementalism is, so far as I can see, the rationale behind the sensible (and, I daresay, *masculine)* solution of "Don't ask, don't tell," the Clinton Administration's policy on gays in the U.S. military, much belittled (no big surprise) by the feminist-homosexualist axis.

As it becomes clear that there are any number of behaviours going on behind closed doors that any number of people find or *would* find personally abhorrent, it seems only sensible to restore privacy and confidentiality to sexual matters. Which, of course, matters of sexuality already *had* until feminists and the voodoo profession ("let it all hang out") got hold of it. Although virtually *all* feminists are notoriously curious about other people's private lives, notoriously inclined to *discuss* private matters with others and notoriously inclined to import this singularly female vice into the workplace (into which the

unfairer sex have arrived *en masse* in the last thirty years), gossip-mongering, in my view, serves no good purpose. I'm not sure how one would argue against the proposition that society will proceed quite nicely and with a minimum amount of friction and abrasion if we all (*All*) remain wholly and completely unaware of the exact percentages of the population who participate in sexual activity A or sexual activity B and which of our friends and acquaintances do likewise.

Put another way, if we were to discover irrefutable evidence that a hitherto undetected majority of the population shares in the deviant sexual behaviour Ernest Hemingway confessed to enjoying with his pet cat, Boise, I fail to see any material benefit for society in having those individuals, collectively, make themselves known to us ("We're Here! We're Bestialists! And We're Not Going Away!") or what good might result from a Bestialists Pride Parade. I don't believe I—or anyone else—needs to have our Bestiality Consciousness Raised and I don't believe that either a Government- or Privately-Funded Study on Bestiality is worthwhile in any way.

In our society, whether we are consciously aware of it or not, if we have a *name* for "it," then we *tolerate* "it," whatever "it" is: at the margins of society and behind closed doors.

It seems to me that the next logical step is for everyone to agree not to talk about their own little precious "it" unless they are reasonably certain that they are in the company of like-minded devotees.

[*While I was finishing "Tangent II,"* Comics Journal 228 *arrived in the mail with a review by a Miss or Mrs. Ruthie Penmark entitled "Dori Seda: Champagne Pissing Dog Fucker or First Great Woman Artist?" which begins, "I do not fuck my dog."*

No further questions, your honour.]

Although I firmly believe, for the reasons stated, that the place for homosexuality—again homosexuality, not those who practice it—is at the margins of society and behind closed doors, I do not believe that homosexuality is necessarily a sin.

According to Luke's Gospel (17:21) when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees "when the kingdome of God should come," Jesus is quoted as saying in reply,

> *I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shal be taken and the other shall be left. (17:34)*
>
> *Two women shall be grinding together: the one shall be taken and the other left.(17:35)*

I think it stretches credulity to the breaking point to suggest that there might be some *other* reason for two *men* to be in a *bed*. Women, sure. Just a sleep-over. Women are like that.

But *men*?

I don't *think* so.

Juxtaposed with the "two women...*grinding* together"...

Whichever of the disciples it was (they were all, presumably, nice orthodox Jewish boys) who recounted Jesus' reply to Luke, I would doubt that *he* or *they* knew what the reply *meant*, but I *would* assume that Luke—a Greek physician—knew *exactly* what the reply meant.

These two verses are followed, in the Authorized Version of the Bible, by 17:36:

> *Two men shall be in the field: the one shall be taken and the other left.*

which, I suspect, was added by a later hand (whose owner *also* knew exactly what the reply meant and thought that what the reply *meant* ought to be *changed*). The marginal note in my King James 1611 facsimile rather dryly remarks:

> *This 36. uerse is wanting in the most of the Greek copies.*

"No doubt," I remember thinking to myself.

Aside from my ambivalence about the Synoptic Jesus which I have voiced elsewhere, it seems to me an open question (whose answer, like the answers to so many questions, is known only to God) as to what these two verses mean, *specifically*: whether they refer to a *specific* male homosexual and a *specific* lesbian who will be saved on the Last Day (too *literal* an interpretation in my view), whether *half* of all male homosexuals and *half* of all lesbians will be saved on the Last Day (*less* literal, but perhaps still *too* literal an interpretation) or if it means, in the more general sense, that according to the Jesus of Luke's Gospel, homosexuality *per se* doesn't automatically disqualify a soul from being saved and that homosexuality exists somewhere on the "sin spectrum" between murder and (let's say) bad hygiene—at a position closer to the latter than the former.

Or (perhaps) at the very least, closer to bad hygiene than murder than the entrenched custodians of the Law of Moses, the Scribes and the Pharisees, would have held in the 1st century of the Common Era.

TANGENT III

(Leaving aside those males who, in the words of a cartoonist friend of mine, "aren't women trapped inside men's bodies—they're just *crazy*...")

No one *wants* to be a woman.

If, prior to our life on this earth, we were presented with the option of being male or female, a short description of the functions of the *male* versus the *female* genitalia (with emphasis on menstruation, menstrual cramps, PMS, labour pains, yeast infections, et al) would most certainly result in so vast a number of us choosing the male "equipment" (what, is this a *trick* question?) that it is difficult, if not impossible, to envision *any* woman being born into this world at all.

To me, it seems less a case of *penis envy* (Sigmund Freud having lived in altogether too chivalrous a time period for such "plain talk" as I offer here) than it is one of *vagina abhorrence* from the standpoint of the "would-be tenant" in contemplating a role as "owner-proprietor". Alas, for reasons known only to our Creator, (almost

exactly) half of us come out on the losing end of the coin toss. If things seem pretty "even steven" (leaving aside the fact that a penis, self-evidently, constitutes an anatomical "presence" and a vagina, self-evidently, an anatomical "absence") over the course of the first ten or eleven years in the life of a boy and a girl there does, alas, "come the day..."

It would take a very hard-hearted individual, indeed (someone like myself, for instance) to find anything *amusing* in the level of Mortification at the Sheer Cosmic Unfairness of It All with which a young girl must greet the news that—every twenty-eight days or so for decades-upon-decades stretching as far into the future as a ten- or eleven-year-old can possibly conceive—that a "little friend will be coming to visit". A "little friend" who (it seems) will be just as catastrophic and humiliating a mess as the one who has (just now) paid a first most unwelcome social call.

No one *wants* to be a woman.

Taxing the limits of my own not-inconsiderable imagination, I have no doubt that—had *I* a "little friend" who paid me such "visits"—in a desperate attempt to cling to what remained of my sanity in the aftershock of the full extent of the horrible news "sinking in," I am certain that I would very quickly set about the business of manufacturing a fairy-tale world for myself in which I was—in all other regards—indistinguishable from a gender which does not...

...leak?

No one *wants* to be a woman.

But, to me—unless you have been forced, by virtue of being a husband (caught between the Rock of Feminism and the Hard Place of your marriage), to hollow yourself out and Believe any number of Impossible Things Before Breakfast—the fact that no one *wants* to be a woman in no way validates entrenching the misapprehension (either in law or in societal custom) that men and women are interchangeable. To do so, it seems to me, is to once again march in lockstep with the communist model of picking and choosing evidence for its ability to support a given hypothesis rather than framing an hypothesis from the best available evidence.

To me, the best available evidence in terms of gender, is that—in the two-gender human "race" between man and woman and their (respectively) "present" and "absent" genitalia, with the arrival of the "little friend" in the feminine camp and with no analogous "little friend" arriving in the masculine camp—men take the gold medal and women, alas, take the silver. It seems to me that women have the option of saying "we are the losers" or they can say, "we win the silver medal." The glass is half-full or the glass is half-empty.

But—whichever assessment seems to best reflect womankind's view of its *unchangeable* circumstance—gender interchangeability (looking as objectively as I can at the best available evidence) amounts to *biological* "social-climbing" on the part of women, just as the attempt to make homosexuality and heterosexuality interchangeable amounts to *societal* "social-climbing" on the part of homosexualists.

The urge deep within the female breast towards interchangeability, towards "crowding the centre," is not limited to striving to make her gender interchangeable with the masculine gender, homosexualists interchangeable with heterosexualists. The idiosyncratic female view that "everything is basically the same as everything else," that distinctions should not/do not and do not/should not exist anywhere, that "discrimination" is solely a pejorative (as Frank Miller adroitly pointed out at one time, when he orders steak instead of hamburger in a restaurant he is committing an act of discrimination) also finds expression in their belief/feeling that children are (more or less) interchangeable with adults and that they should be treated as such: that the imposition of any kind of discipline on a child by its father is simply patriarchal tyranny, an abuse of power which can lead only to the child experiencing lifelong voodoo profession trauma. Children, like adults, have inalienable human rights (goes the screw-loose approximation of female "reasoning") and must, therefore, be allowed full license to pursue—with the imposition of as few external limitations as possible—what children perceive to be their own best interests.

The end product of this "reasoning" is on display in the food court of any shopping mall in the soon-to-be-completely-uncivilized world on any given Saturday afternoon.

New Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast:

> 15. Children must be allowed to raise themselves and determine for themselves what does and does not constitute ethical, responsible behaviour.

What is at issue, it seems to me, is the dichotomy which exists between the masculine and feminine interpretations of "out of the mouths of babes..."

To a man, this aphorism implies that "although children are unshaped and incomplete beings until they reach the age of their majority, it is an interesting naturally-occurring phenomenon that—apropos nothing and even in the earliest stages of verbal communication—a child will, on rare occasions, voice an observation which, in defiance of all rules of logic, is actually germane and relevant to an adjacent conversation taking place on a much higher plane of sentient communication."

The feminine interpretation tends more in the direction of "...because children are, indeed, from Heaven and are pure and untainted and good and decent and true in all regards, full of pure love and joy and compassion and innocence, their utterances, likewise, are pure and untainted and good and decent and true in all regards and the sooner we can all set our hearts on a quest to find the purest and least tainted and most decent six-year-old in the world and appoint him/her leader of the civilized world and do whatever he/she tells us to do without question, the sooner we will arrive at the utopia which is always just there over the rainbow."

Put another way, I think the Prophet Isaiah's well-known prognostication, "*And a childe shal lead them...*" is one to warm the hearts of dim-bulb women everywhere and to chill the soul of every God-fearing man. It also seems to me that, with the feminist takeover of Academe and the media and feminist infiltration of the world's governing councils, we are probably a number of steps further along that particular "yellow-brick road" as well—and

probably a good deal further along than we were in Isaiah's 8th century BCE.

Being a firm believer that statistics can be manipulated to support any argument, I tend to avoid them—except in those instances where the margin is so great as to imply (even with the greatest allowance for statistical error) that "something ain't kosher in Milwaukee" (the "95% of alimony and child support being paid *by* men *to* women," being a good example).

When it comes to the problems posed by feminists endeavouring to "crowd the centre" by attempting to make children interchangeable with adults, I offer the statistic that one of the very few categories of crime which is increasing, rather than decreasing, in our society is that of Youth Crime, which is reportedly up a whopping 35% over the period 1990-1999.

I think myself safe in saying that this is a direct result of the implementation in our society of the feminist view that *anything* is better than having a father rear his child in the traditional way that worked for centuries upon centuries (mother, with her idiosyncratic notions of love *uber alles,* in charge of daily, minute-by-minute custodial care and—"Wait 'til your father gets home"—fathers in charge of the setting of boundaries and the imposition of discipline and "course corrections" when an attempt is made to breach those boundaries). To the feminist, *anyone* is preferable to the father being in charge of a child's upbringing: social workers, daycare supervisors, girlfriends, homosexualists, how-to books, Oprah Winfrey, the voodoo profession, security guards at the mall, teachers—even the child *itself* is more readily trusted than not-so-dear old Dad.

In my view, women want too much to be loved unreservedly for them to be entrusted with "setting a course" for a child's development. Coupled with their misbegotten female notion that the source of their *own* unhappiness has always been "not being allowed to do exactly *what* they want exactly *when* they want," they strive to create happiness in their children by letting their *children* do exactly what *they* want exactly when *they* want. A recipe for disaster, of course, but then men, with their long experience with the unfairer sex, could tell them that you can't have both. If a father or a boyfriend or a husband lets his wife and/or girlfriend do *whatever* she wants *whenever* she wants, what he will get from her—far from unreserved love—will be wilful condescension coupled with varying degrees of contempt. She will blame *him* that absolute freedom does not result in absolute happiness. And likewise do children. With no masculine discipline imposed upon them, no boundaries to be observed which can't be transgressed simply by wilfully doing so—or by playing mother's "heart on her sleeve" emotions like a concert violin—the result is never absolute happiness but, rather, a state more closely resembling absolute misery and the mother (as the source of that misery) and the father (as duplicitous abdicator of his own authority) being treated with the aforementioned wilful condescension and varying degrees of contempt.

Ideology being an absolute in the feminist world, this causes yet another instance of selecting evidence to support the given hypothesis, another Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast:

16. When one is loved unreservedly, one is treated with wilful condescension and varying degrees of contempt.

"Aren't *men* to blame for any of this?"

Well, yes. I think it would be impossible to underestimate the degree to which men are fully culpable for the rise in Youth Crime, *specifically* through allowing feminists and the voodoo profession to persuade us that discipline—both physical and verbal—are "old hat" and part of a discredited "patriarchal model": that discipline, in any form, is synonymous with abuse. To me, taking it as a given that reason cannot prevail in any argument with emotion, there must come a point—with women *and* children—where verbal discipline has to be asserted, and if *verbal* discipline proves insufficient, that *physical* discipline be introduced. Women *and* children have soft, cushy buttocks which are, nonetheless, shot through with reasonably sensitive nerve endings.

I believe that those buttocks are there for a very specific purpose intended by their Creator.

There is no good reason that a man should *not* listen to misguided, fairy-tale vocalizations and unsound, emotion-based twaddle-and-nonsense for however long it amuses or interests him to do so or for however long seems to him politic and/or chivalrous (standards will vary).

However.

When the point *does* arrive when the amusement value has exhausted itself or good manners and chivalry have been stretched to their limit, "That's *enough,"* spoken firmly, distinctly and above a conversational tone—with women *and* children—should be sufficient. If it proves *in*sufficient, measured blows to the buttocks—"measured," to me, meaning blows which, cumulatively, leave no mark which endures longer than, say, an hour or two but which will make sitting down an uncomfortable proposition for a comparable length of time, blows which are an inescapable consequence of failing to heed the verbal "that's *enough"* seem the only sensible way to evenly balance the unfair advantage emotion has over reason. This, to me, falls *well short* of actual physical abuse but exists *well within* the upper registers of "attention-getting devices" for those women and children who have proven themselves to be of inadequate and/or unfocussed attentions.

Of course, in our present society, with its feminist-infected judiciary, any husband/father following this sensible course of action would very quickly run afoul of the voodoo profession and the law and find himself up on charges of common assault or domestic violence and (more likely as not) sentenced to "ist" style "re-education" in the feminist way of doing things. In our feminist-infected, feminist-*mis*directed society the husband/father really has only two courses of action open to him: a) capitulate to feminism or b) leave.

I think it safe to say that women/feminists— having adopted Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast numbers 15 and 16 (collect them all!) in *place* of verbal and physical discipline for their children (and in light of that 35% increase in Youth Crime)—have demonstrated that they are incapable of either understanding or administering discipline.

Slow-witted to the point of catatonia as feminists have, time and again, proven themselves to be when their emotions tell them one thing ("absolute freedom makes children happy") and reason tells them another ("children need firm parentally-imposed discipline, both verbal and physical, and I, as a feminist, am not capable of administering either") there is little hope that this situation will change anytime soon. It is, as is always the case, foolish in the *extreme* for men to concede *any* philosophical territory to feminists for exactly that reason. Caught between what her emotions are telling her and what reason plainly indicates, a feminist is capable of vacillating for decades (if not centuries) before conceding any self-evident point.

Yes, I believe that men must shoulder more than their fair share of the blame for the sorry state of affairs in so many areas of our misguided Feminist Society. It is a natural mistake to assume that perception-is-perception-is-perception, but that in no way mitigates the blame that must attach to men for so carelessly overlooking for so long the dichotomy between masculine and feminine perceptions.

Take, as an example, the late Charles Schulz's wonderful comic strip, *Peanuts*.

We all loved *Peanuts*, right? We were all reading the same strips and we were all laughing at them. If anything was a shared enthusiasm of men and women, an example of gender interchangeability, it was that We All Loved *Peanuts* (particularly in its hey-day in the 60s and 70s).

But, it occurs to me, that the masculine and feminine perceptions of the strip were very, very different.

Men, I think, enjoyed the ridiculousness of the premise: a bunch of six-year-old kids talking like adults. One of my favourite strips had Schroeder coming out to the pitcher's mound where Charlie Brown says something to him about how its driving him crazy how badly the team is playing. And Schroeder says, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards". Charlie Brown, of course, asks, "What?" And Linus comes out to the pitcher's mound and says "It's from the Book of Job, it means..." and suddenly *all* of the kids are out at the pitcher's mound debating the Book of Job (with Lucy, of *course*, grousing, "What about Job's wife? I don't think she gets enough credit!" Job's wife, with her immortal advice as to how Job might escape his ordeal: "Curse God and die.")

A nice balance, the ridiculousness of children talking about these adult concerns with a little low-grade theology into the bargain.

But, I think for *women*, this was evidence that "finally, at least one *man* 'gets' it." "Gets" what? "At least one man understands that children *are* adults and we should be *treating them* as adults."

The "out of the mouths of babes" thing:

"If we would just do what the *children* are telling us to do, we could have all the world's problems straightened out in a week-and-a-half!"

Ah.

You don't believe me. "No, Dave. I think you've gone too far with that one. Give me one concrete example of Feminists treating children as adults."

Elian Gonzalez.

To me, *there* is a clear and perfect example of Feminism Run Amuck in our society. There is an example where, for a period of many, many months, it was "up in the air" as to whether or not a six-year-old...

A. *Six.* Year. Old.

...was or was not going to be granted the right to apply for political asylum.

Political. Asylum.

And who represented the "yay" side? You got it. Feminist social workers and the voodoo profession. I remember being moved to wonder if Dell Publishing had had the opportunity to publish a *Children's Big Golden Book of Marxist Theory* or if Mattel had gotten the *See-and-Say* version of *Das Kapital* into Toys R Us in time to make a useful contribution to the proceedings.

I believe that every hollowed-out ventriloquist-puppet husband from Bill Clinton on down who *allowed* such a travesty to proceed for longer than nine or ten minutes—yes—I think they are very much to blame and are wholly culpable for dramatically worsening the Feminist mess in which we find ourselves.

Which leads me to another example of feminist sloganeering: "Child poverty".

Gosh, I know what you mean. Before I was ten years old, I doubt that I ever grossed more than a hundred dollars a year.

That's *insane*. There is *no such thing* as "child poverty". Children are not *poor* and children are not *rich*. There is no such thing as a *white-collar* child and there is no such thing as a *blue-collar* child. Children do not file income tax returns. Children do not pay rent or arrange mortgages.

We are back in the realm of two-plus-two does not, in fact, equal five. The best evidence we have available would seem to indicate that two-plus-two, in fact, equals four, instead. You can debate the point if you wish, but I can scarcely imagine on what basis you intend to do so. So, let me just reiterate for the benefit of the emotionally-impaired:

There. Is. No. Such. Thing. As. Child. Poverty.

As a caring and compassionate society, we give to unwed mothers, unemployed mothers, unemployable mothers, unemployed ex-wife/mothers and unemployable ex-wife/mothers—*gratis*—a completely and entirely *un*earned income, the amount of which—relative to 90% of the world's population—can only be conservatively estimated as being somewhere in the vicinity of *mind-bogglingly indescribable wealth*. And let me—*quite* uncharitably— point out that the decision to *do so* was made by *men* at a time when women were as rare as hen's teeth in the legislatures and governing councils of our civilization.

We are, as men, perfectly aware that the vast majority of women are incapable of providing for themselves, let alone providing for their offspring. This is the underlying motivation in the development of welfare as we know it and the use of discrete euphemisms like "welfare" and "mothers' allowances" instead of "bovine charity" and "bimbo subsidies". I break ranks with my own chivalrous gender to point out that—when the loony left of Canada's own Political Action Committee on the Status of Women stages a protest on Parliament Hill (as they did in

the fall of 2000) demanding a) greater independence and b) more social programs—they make themselves irretrievably ridiculous in the eyes of anyone capable of coherent thought.

Feminists will always want more money from men, more money for unemployed and unemployable mothers. Because men are, in the main, compassionate and charitable fellows collectively, feminists tend always to get the money that they seek. If men are, collectively, too chivalrous (present narrator excepted) to point out the extent to which the whole sordid process undermines the feminist hallucination in toto—to point out (as an example) that "equal pay for work of equal value" is *already The Rule* as it *has been The Rule* for centuries, that it is, in fact, the *Central* Reality of our (largely) free market economy and it is only that *women's* work, on the whole, is of *lesser* value as determined by that (largely) free market economy (whereby, for instance, the value of the work of a self-publishing cartoonist like myself is established by The Rule of that free market as being considerably less than that of many, many other cartoonists and that of many, many other disciplines and professions)—it might be hoped that women would reciprocate by being so good as to desist from attempting to propagate any further the delusion that children are poor.

Children are *not* poor.

Children are *children*.

A child's wealth is the depth and breadth of interest and attention and caring and discipline and *time* (not *quality* time but *quantity* time) which is given to it by its parents with an eye to shaping it into a worthwhile adult.

Children are not poor.

Single mothers are not poor.

People in *Thailand* are *poor*. People in *Malaysia* are *poor*. People in *Iraq* are *poor*. People in *San Salvador* are *poor*.

As a single mother, you are merely *less indescribably wealthy* than you would *like* to be. Which—considering that it was your own series of unwise choices which brought you to the situation in which you find yourself—seems somewhat less a cause for either hand-wringing anxiety or "give 'til it hurts" generosity which you seem always to think are the *only* two appropriate reactions to yourself and to your "better off than 90% of the world's population" circumstance.

I am a firm believer in the Islamic notion that the community has a right to a specific share of each individual's accumulated wealth—quite apart from whatever share is accounted for by taxes. There is no direct English translation for *zakat*, but that is, roughly, the concept behind it. Alms-giving-as-taxation, to feed the hungry in your own geographic community (I donate to the Food Bank of Waterloo Region). But my belief in and adherence to the *zakat* in no way diminishes my revulsion at the feminist effort to make children interchangeable with adults, to describe children as either *poor* or *rich* with, in short, the feminist tactical effort to entrench this viewpoint in law so as to increase the unearned income of unemployed and unemployable women by establishing a guaranteed income for each child (which incomes would, of course, become the property of the custodial parent—three guesses who *that* turns out to be). If this is *not* the sleazy, greedy and underhanded long-term motive behind the misuse of the term "child poverty" by feminists in the industrialized countries, I apologize, but I think it is ridiculous to entertain the idea that feminists have any *other* tactical objective in mind.

It is another example of feminists "crowding the centre," attempting to make women interchangeable with men, homosexualists interchangeable with heterosexualists and children interchangeable with adults. To me, it is nonsensical. It is an Impossible Thing to Believe Before Breakfast. And yet, increasingly, it is the way we conduct our society.

Yes, men are very much to blame. Take the minor hit movie which spawned a sequel or two: *Look Who's Talking*. Is there any more universal a masculine trait than to supply a comedic voice for a baby—to narrate the unthinking and insensible gestures and expressions of a wholly unshaped and incomplete human-being-in-the-raw-material-state and to give it a thinking, sensible, humorous and ironic context far, far, far, *far* in excess of that being's actual aptitudes and abilities?

And could there have been any more universal a mistake made by men in doing so? A harmless bit of fun?

Perhaps, but then a man is always aware that a baby is a baby and an adult is an adult. It seems to me that men are culpable for missing—missing completely and thoroughly—that the same cannot be said of a woman's awareness. In fact, with a woman, as an emotion-based being, exactly the opposite is true. To a woman, a baby, for all intents and purposes, as a being self-evidently capable of *feeling* emotions and capable of *displaying* emotions and *vocalizing* emotions, *to a woman*, in all ways which are vital or important or significant *to a woman*...

...a baby is interchangeable with an adult.

So what is a game, a harmless diversion, a source of entertainment *to a man*, merely reinforces a central and (to me) imbecilic female conceit. If women did not necessarily believe, in context, that the baby was *actually* saying and/or thinking, "Uh, y'mind passin' me that bottle there, Mac?" all *that* did was reinforce for them that *their* perception of what *was* going on in that tiny cranium was the more accurate of the two ("Daddy is being *so* silly"), reinforce for them that their own predisposition to believe that life begins with the first visible expression of emotion and that—once *visible* emotion and *vocalized* emotion exist in a human being—anything which is grafted onto that being later (intellect, reason, literacy, etc.) is really just window-dressing. At best, secondary. At best, tangential. And reinforced for them that men—fathers—were and are frivolous individuals who perceive babies (and, as a consequence, everything *else*) inaccurately. Considering how dramatically limited the female intellect is, yes, I think that men are very much to blame for allowing a profound misapprehension like that to flourish in the female "brain".

TANGENT IV

It gets worse.

To me, it gets far worse when it comes to the *animal* kingdom and there, again, I think men must shoulder

more than their fair share of the blame.

In the same sense that it is true that women see themselves as interchangeable with men, homosexualists as interchangeable with heterosexualists, children and babies as interchangeable with adults, it is also true, for the most part, that women believe that animals are interchangeable with human beings.

I believe, for the sake of appearances, they will allow themselves to be bullied into acknowledging that there *is* a distinction:

"Uh, you *do* realize that your cat is *just* a cat. That a cat is a very *low* form of life."

Yes, pushed to the wall and having to, you know, say it *out loud, to a man,* a woman will grudgingly admit that a human being is a human being and a cat is a cat. But she is certainly not going to be amenable to exploring the subject to any great depth.

"That is, you *are* aware that, no matter how much time and effort you devoted to doing so, you could never teach your cat to play even the *simplest* card game, like Hearts."

That's true. I know that little Snowball will never learn how to play Hearts.

Inside, I can practically guarantee you that what she will be thinking is: Well, so *what?* I know lots of *people* who have never learned how to play Hearts, and/or What's so special about a *stupid card game?* and/or I think it's more important what's *inside* a person than whether or not they can play cards. Even calling female attention to this, making them laugh at the absurdity of it (I *hope* making them laugh at the absurdity of it: otherwise we are all inhabiting a Circle of Hell far closer to the innermost ring than I have hitherto suspected) will, I am entirely certain, in no way modify the fact that this is the way they think—or, rather, "think": with their hearts, first and foremost, their love for little Snowball or little Whatever-It-Is dictating the fairy-tale foundation upon which their lives rest: that little Snowball and Mummy are just two peas in a pod.

"Mummy."

Consider *that* one, if you will, gentlemen.

As the comedienne, Rita Rudner, put it, "My husband and I just got a dog. Now, he's *not* a child substitute. At least, that's what his pediatrician tells us." At one level—you know, confined to the kitchen, the laundry room, the backyard—however inherently stupid, there is a charming, amusing and whimsical quality to that. Less charming, less amusing and less whimsical when one realizes that women are out in the workforce now. Many of them occupy positions of authority. And they are allowed to *vote.*

Sensitive as the antennae on an ant as the average feminist is to the *slightest* nuance or *hint* of depredation (however inadvertent) which might in any way cast aspersions on her Inviolate Status as Citizen and Fully-Fledged Human Being, still it is the pleasure—nay, the *pride*—of many, many, many of them to refer to themselves as the "Mummy" of feral and insensible beasts and to "kiss" on the mouth a creature which uses its tongue to keep its anus clear of feces.

Here, again, the masculine gender must shoulder more than its fair share of the blame for this deplorable state of affairs, most especially for the historical decision to allow animals in the house. Clearly, this came about through the fault of fathers surrendering to the weakness they experience in dealing with their daughters. No lofty trajectory of the imagination is required to envision the *centuries* of pleading that must have gone into the winning of that first victory by a daughter over her father: inclement weather, undoubtedly, serving as the thin end of the wedge...

"Please, Papa, it's *freezing* outside."

...and, in the succeeding years, the rest of the civilizational barricades between man and beast falling like dominos. (Well, all right, just this *once*) KLUNK (Well, all right but he *stays* in the entryway) KLUNK (Well, all right, but keep him in the *kitchen)* KLUNK (Well, all right, but keep him on the *hardwood)* KLUNK (Well, all right, but he has to stay on the *floor)* KLUNK (Well, all right, but he has to stay at the *foot* of the bed) KLUNK (Well, all right, but he has to stay on *top* of the covers) KLUNK

Who can doubt that we're only a generation or two away from "Well, all right, but don't give him the *good* china"?

It's not hard to see the question that that first capitulating father asked himself and which each successive father asked *himself* as each successive societal barricade fell:

"Where's the harm?"

The harm, I believe, as we are seeing now, is that women quite literally don't know whether they are human beings or animals. Nature reflects and there is, to me, a fundamental danger to society in the undeveloped, tactical, emotion-based female "mind" staring lovingly into the eyes of a feral beast which derives interchangeable pleasure from eating, sleeping and licking feces from itself...*and* with that female "mind" *identifying* her-(it-?)self *with* that feral creature and (the crux of this part of my thesis) *persuading* herself that she has *more* in common with a feces-licking creature than the opposite gender of her own species *or* seeing herself as having *just as much* in common with feral beasts as with men *or* seeing herself as a mediator *halfway between* man and beast *or* seeing herself as an ambassador *to* the world of men *from* the animal kingdom.

All, to me, are sickening realities to contemplate. All that is unknown is the numerical percentages of womankind's members who mentally inhabit each of the four skewed outlooks.

What if?

What *if,* gentlemen, only three percent of existing women genuinely consider themselves to be human and ninety-seven percent consider themselves to be animals or part animals?

You think I'm being an alarmist.

Permit me to buttress my argument with the assertion that there is a world of difference between a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the masculine innovation of the 19th century—a nice civilized gesture, scarcely on par with a genuinely noble human enterprise (like ending slavery, as an example), but a nice gesture—and the Feminist "innovation" of the century just completed, animal "rights".

Animal.

Rights.

Insufficient to screw-loose Feminist purposes is a Society dedicated to Preventing acts of Cruelty against Animals, an altogether sensible example of *noblesse oblige* from God's highest creation on this earth to the lower life forms (*feel* the "ladies" *bristle* at *that* one). No, what is required by feminists is nothing short of Pan-DNA Rights and Freedoms.

Animal.

Rights.

Can the day be far distant when the local animal shelter will have to present a writ of *habeas corpus*, convene a "show cause" hearing and provide a court-appointed attorney ("Do you understand your Animal Rights as I have explained them to you?" "Woof.") before they can be allowed to lock up a stray mutt found digging up lawns and scattering garbage?

Clearly, when womankind sets what passes for its "mind" upon "crowding the centre," it seizes upon anything and everything:—homosexualists, babies, children, cats, dogs—to do so.

It seems to me that this is part and parcel of women being the silver medallists in the human race. If woman cannot achieve the masculine gold medal, then everyone and everything else as far as the eye can see must be recast as a silver medallist as well. Gold medal status must be made aberrational by every means of collectivist exclusion available to the unfairer sex. Society must be reshaped in such a way that silver medal status becomes the societal norm and gold medal status is made interchangeable with it, subservient to it and/or moved to the periphery of its own masculine context which defines it.

There is a certain *hysteria* (in its literal definition which so offends—and *defines*—feminists) which obtains here: a demented, histrionic quality of "if I can't be equal to you, then I will cast myself into the gutter." If a woman can't be a man, she will make herself interchangeable with homosexualists, with babies, with children, with cats and with dogs.

"A woman's right to choose," indeed. And, to me, a lunatic misuse of free will, undoubtedly as old as free will itself.

TANGENT V

(All quotations in Tangent V are from David J. Garrow's Bearing the Cross, *William Morrow and Company, New York, 1986. Used without permission)*

Before MIA became more widely synonymous with "missing in action," it was, first, the acronym of the Montgomery Improvement Association, an organization which—on the basis of the May 17, 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (which held that the segregationist doctrine of "separate but equal" was unconstitutional)—campaigned to desegregate the city buses of Montgomery, Alabama. The Association chose to do this by means of a boycott of the Montgomery City Lines buses by its Negro patrons, insightfully grasping the fact that the greatest leverage possible in effecting change in a capitalist society is the withholding of capital (the Negro population of Montgomery represented fully three quarters of all bus patrons in that city).

The MIA was composed of leaders from the Montgomery Negro community, many of whom were Baptist ministers. While the means (the boycott) and the end (desegregation) were clear, this *was* Alabama and the conquest of their own individual and collective fear was, clearly, their most pressing on-going concern. When word came that newspaper photographers would be attending an early MIA mass meeting, some of the ministers seemed reluctant to volunteer as speakers. E. D. Nixon, a past president of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP (The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) rebuked them angrily:

Somebody in this thing has got to get faith. I am just ashamed of you. You said that God has called you to lead the people and now you are afraid and gone to pieces because the man tells you that the newspaper men will be here and your pictures might come out in the newspaper. Somebody has got to get hurt in this thing and if you preachers are not the leaders then we have to pray that God will send us some more leaders.

The presidency of the fledgling MIA devolved upon a young minister named Martin Luther King whose call to the ministry, by his own admission, "was not a miraculous or supernatural something, on the contrary it was an inner urge calling me to serve humanity". He had previously existed in "a state of scepticism...until I studied a course in [the] Bible in which I came to see that, behind the *legends and myths* of the Book were many profound truths which one could not escape." (italics mine)

Now, of course, I was religious. I grew up in the church. I'm the son of a preacher...my grandfather was a preacher, my great grandfather was a preacher, my only brother is a preacher, my daddy's brother is a preacher, so I didn't have much choice I guess.

The first time that Martin Luther King addressed the Montgomery Improvement Association, he told them, "We must keep God in the forefront. Let us be Christian in all of our action."

If it was true that conquering their own fear was the largest concern of the MIA membership, it was certainly no less of a pressing imperative for the Association's young president. A critical moment arrived for him on the night of January 27, 1955 when his faith in himself and his ability to serve in his new capacity was at a low ebb. The phone rang, the latest in a series of anonymous callers to the home he shared with his wife and baby daughter. "Nigger, we are tired of you and your mess now. And if you aren't out of this town in three days, we're going to blow your brains out and blow up your house." As Martin Luther King recalled it later:

I got to the point that I couldn't take it any longer. I was weak. Something said to me, you can't call on Daddy now, he's up in Atlanta a hundred and seventy-five miles away. You can't even call on Mama now. You've got to call on the something in that person that your Daddy used to tell you about, that power that can make a way out of no way.

And I discovered, then, that religion had become something real to me and I had to know God for myself. And I bowed down over that cup of coffee. I will never forget it. I prayed a prayer and I prayed out loud that night. I said, "Lord, I'm down here trying to do what's right. I think I'm right. I think the cause that we represent is right. But, Lord, I must confess that I'm weak now. I'm faltering. I'm losing my courage. And I can't let the people see me like this, because if they see me weak and losing my courage, they will begin to get weak."

And it seemed, at that moment, that I could hear an inner voice saying to me, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And, lo, I will be with you, even unto the end of the world." I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. No, never alone. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone.

The King house *was* bombed several nights later, as King addressed the congregation at Ralph Abernathy's First Baptist Church. In his own words, King "accepted the word of the bombing calmly. My religious experience a few nights before had given me the strength to face it."

Addressing the crowd which had gathered outside his home, a crowd which (not surprisingly) threatened, at any moment, to turn into an unruly mob, King said:

I want you to love your enemies. Be good to them. Love them and let them know you love them...if I am stopped, this movement will not stop...if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place.

An ancient schism, as old as humanity itself, began to form within that "movement" hard on the heels of these extraordinary events. To me, it was a schism exemplified, on the one hand, by the comments of Jo Ann Robinson, president of Montgomery's Women's Political Council:

The amazing thing about our movement is that it is a protest of the people. It's not a one man show. It is not the preachers' show. It's the people. The masses of this town, who are tired of being trampled on, are responsible. The leaders couldn't stop it if they wanted to.

...and on the other, by the words of Reverend Glenn E. Smiley, a white official of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and an expert on non-violence and the non-violent stratagems of Mahatma Gandhi. Writing to friends, Smiley described his first interview with Martin Luther King as "one of the most glorious, yet tragic interviews I have ever had." He went on to say that

I believe that God has called Martin Luther King to lead a great movement here and in the South. But, why does God lay such a burden on one so young, so inexperienced, so good? King can be a Negro Gandhi, or he can be made into an unfortunate demagogue destined to swing from a lynch mob's tree.

After addressing one of the early Montgomery Improvement Association mass meetings himself, Smiley also wrote

Religious fervor is high and they are trying to keep it spiritual. Not once was there an expression of hatred towards whites and the ovation I received when I talked of Gandhi, his campaign, and then of the Cross, was tremendous. They want to do the will of God, and they are sure this is the will of God.

Unfortunately for Reverend, or, rather, *Doctor* King, his people and his movement, Smiley's influence was quickly overshadowed by that of Bayard Rustin, a known communist sympathizer, a suspected Communist Party member and a homosexualist who said of the MIA: "The movement [in Montgomery] is strong because it is religious as well as political. It has been built upon the most stable institution of the Southern Negro community—the Church." Most of Bayard's comments, not surprisingly, amount to damning with faint praise. To the faithful, the Church is a stable institution only insofar as it is sustained by the abiding faith, of its members, in God. That is, the Church as "institution" is not the same thing as the Elks Club, *The Times of London*, Westminster or the American Communist Party. To view it as such is to endeavour—tactically—to diminish its infinitely larger and infinitely more significant role in human affairs to a commonplace, mundane and—tactical—level. Not surprisingly this is always the approach secular interests take in describing the Church. Note Rustin's description of the movement as "...religious *as well as* political," as if the two forces were of comparable validity—as opposed to Smiley's view of the early MIA as a Christian enterprise seeking to do the will of God in the area of racial injustice. "We must keep God in the forefront," as *Reverend* King said.

One of the foremost potential problems that the movement faced—and which was not *widely* known until much later—was *Dr.* King's womanizing, his manifold acts of adultery. It is almost inconceivable to me that someone could consider himself a good Christian and a minister of the Gospel and conduct himself in his personal life the way *Dr.* King did. Although the secular-humanist-socialists he allowed into the SCLC could remark with equanimity (as one staff member did) "I watched women making passes at Martin Luther King. I *could not believe* what I was seeing in white Westchester [County, an affluent New York satellite community] women...They would walk up to him and they would sort of lick their lips and hint and [hand him] notes...After I saw that thing that evening I didn't blame him," his behaviour *was, obviously* blameworthy. It seems to me that the sort of precautions taken by the evangelist Billy Graham of never communicating with women, one-on-one, unless there was a staff member present—"present" as in being self-evidently privy to any conversation however quietly whispered and *intercepting* any communication—should have been taken in Dr. King's case. This is not foolproof, of cqurse. As any experience with women will tell you a) a slut is a slut is a slut and b) there is no slut quite as bad as a rich, white slut. But, clearly, for a minister of the gospel message of Jesus Christ measures should have been taken.

Rev. Ralph Abernathy was assaulted in his church office one night and badly injured by a man who claimed that Abernathy had had an intimate relationship with the man's wife. This prompted Los Angeles pastor J. Raymond Henderson to caution King that he must avoid

"even the appearance of evil. One of the most damning influences is that of women. They themselves too often delight in the satisfaction they get out of affairs with men of unusual prominence. Enemies are not above using them to a man's detriment. White women can be lures. You must exercise more than care. You must be vigilant, indeed."

Presumably, Rev. Henderson's warning had some effect—at least in the short term—to judge by the following event:

In mid-September, King traveled to New York to speak at several churches to stimulate interest in the Youth March. That same week, his book [Stride Toward Freedom] *was published and King made a number of appearances to help promote it. One of those was a Saturday autographing session at Blumstein's department store in Harlem. King, surrounded by friends and admirers as he sat on a chair in the book department, was suddenly approached by a middle-aged black woman who asked, "Is this Martin Luther King?" King looked up and replied, "Yes it is." Quickly, the woman pulled a sharp seven-inch Japanese letter opener from her handbag and slammed it into King's upper left chest. The shocked onlookers grabbed the woman, and the store security officer handcuffed her. King was fully conscious and remained calmly seated in the chair until an ambulance arrived. With the weapon protruding from his chest, King was driven to nearby Harlem Hospital. As a team of doctors prepared for surgery, police officials brought the assailant, Mrs. Izola Ware Curry, to the hospital for King to make a positive identification. A loaded pistol had been found in her purse, and her incoherent comments indicated severe mental illness. After King identified her, she was taken away to a mental hospital...King would have a scar, in the shape of a cross, right over his heart, but otherwise would suffer no lingering ill effects.*

I'm sure that, from the vantage point of my largely feminist readers, I attach too much significance to the fact that—because he was immobilized by this vicious assault—the Youth March marked the first time that his wife, Coretta, "stood in" for him and that it was Coretta King and Ella Baker who set up a temporary movement office inside Harlem Hospital during *Dr.* King's recovery.

It was shortly after this that *Reverend* King was quoted as saying, "I don't want to own any property. I don't need any property. I don't need a house. A man who devotes himself to a cause, who dedicates himself to a cause doesn't need a family."

Very unusual for a husband to even allow himself to *think*, let alone say *out loud*.

Of course (no great surprise) he *got* a house. And then a *bigger* house. Stanley Levison was quoted as saying:

The house troubled him greatly. When he moved from a very small house to one that was large enough to give the growing family some room, he was troubled by it and would ask all of his close friends when they came to the house whether they didn't think it was too big and it wasn't right for him to have. And though everyone tried to tell him that this big house wasn't as big as he thought it was—it was a very modest little house—to him it loomed as large as a mansion and he searched his own mind for ways of making it smaller.

Meanwhile, back at Ella Baker:

Ella Baker, along with Rustin and Stanley Levison, constituted the third in a trinity of socialist-secular-humanist influences which lobbied intensively for *Reverend* King to confine himself to the role of *Dr.* King. Again, unfortunately for *Reverend* King, his people and his movement, she soon attained the position of associate director of the newly founded outgrowth of the MIA, the SCLC (The Southern Christian Leadership Conference). Originally a socialist-centred Southern Leadership Conference on Transportation (Rustin's tactical "logic of the next step" move to expand the Montgomery bus boycott into a pan-Southern action) it was only through the insistence of *Reverend* King that the word "Christian" was incorporated into the title. Rustin had warned that such a move would discourage the non-religious from participating. Again, unfortunately for Reverend King, his people and his movement, that proved not to be the case.

When the SCLC foundered in a period of inactivity, a group of students, on its own initiative, began "sit-ins" at segregated lunch counters in North Carolina and soon thereafter organized themselves into the SNCC (The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) of which Ella Baker appointed herself a kind of socialist-secular-humanist den mother while still attached to the SCLC executive. She warned the students that the SCLC would attempt to take over their movement and insisted, in good secular-humanist-socialist-proto-feminist fashion, that the students be left to function without any adult supervision (you know, that "out of the mouths of babes" thing).

While undermining the SCLC in the minds of the SNCC students, Ella Baker continued to "serve" in her role as acting executive director (I would assume that Rustin, Levison and Coretta had pressured Martin Luther King to advance Ella Baker to such lofty heights in what was now a Christian organization only in the most *ostensible* sense), a position which she would ultimately resign:

Baker's departure, however, left a legacy of strained feelings [emphasis mine] *in its wake. She had never held King or Abernathy in high regard and, once she had formally left the organization, she made no secret of her attitude. Baker had found them unwilling to discuss substantive issues with her* as an equal [emphasis mine] *and unreceptive to any critical comments she might offer. To James Lawson* [an SCLC staff member], *the root of the problem was simple: "Martin had real problems with having a woman in a high position." Baker also did not support a "leader-centred" approach to organizing a movement and felt no special awe for King. "I was not a person to be enamoured of anyone," she noted. The ministers of the SCLC, on the other hand, thought Baker was haughty and aloof, with what they felt was a disdain for anyone who was a black male preacher. The resulting bitterness would not mellow with time.*

In fairness to Baker, she *did* warn King early in her participation with the movement that "we are losing the

initiative in the Civil Rights struggle in the south, mainly because of the absence of a dynamic philosophy *or spiritual force"* [italics mine]. Had King "stayed the course"—keeping God at the forefront of the movement through maintaining *exclusively* Christian leadership by Christian leaders (ministers and pastors) in the Southern *Christian Leadership* Conference (I mean, duh)—the outcome, I suspect, would have been very different. Alas, such was not to be the case.

It amazes me that, even with the religious experience in his kitchen in 1957, so much of Martin Luther King's efforts remained wholly and completely secular, humanist and socialist in nature. In his meetings with Vice-President Richard Nixon and Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, his tone is always that of a Labour negotiator, a quasi-socialist, with nary a word said by him about God, nary an effort made to communicate as a minister of the Gospel to wayward Christians (Kennedy and Johnson being rather more wayward as Christians go, one would guess, than were Nixon and Eisenhower). *Had* Nixon, as an example, been addressed as a Quaker: "Mr. Vice President, how can you as a white Christian gentleman deny to your black Christian brothers the rights and freedoms which *you* enjoy?" it seems to me that it would have left a good deal less "wiggle" room. "Let my people go." *Reverend* King as Aaron, addressing Richard Nixon as Pharaoh. There were any number of approaches that made more sense when standing on the moral high ground (as Martin Luther King surely was) than to function as a secular-humanist-quasi-socialist mouthpiece for a run-of-the- mill Marxist like Bayard Rustin. Certainly, Martin Luther King had demonstrated, time and again, his oratorical skill in the striking—just *so*—of the "right note," *le mot juste*—and nowhere more exaltedly than in his "I have a dream" speech delivered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in the summer of 1963.

> *I have a dream that, one day, every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together...*

It is hard to imagine *any* occasion in human history when the words of the fourth and fifth verses of Isaiah's monumental and awe-inspiring 40th chapter had so resonated with the souls and minds of so many people in one place and in one time than on that glorious sunlit August afternoon.

> *Let freedom ring...When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics—will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last."*

(Reportedly, Coretta King was *furious* in the aftermath of The Speech that she was not allowed to accompany King to his meeting with President Kennedy. I suspect that she had focussed her attentions upon an earlier reference in The Speech to "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers" and that her female nature—typically and misguidedly—believed this reference to black and white *children* had some analogous application to black *men* and black *women*, white *men* and white *women*. That is, if the Reverend Martin Luther King belonged in the Oval Office that afternoon, so did his housewife).

Anyway, it did amaze me that a man like Martin Luther King—who was capable of writing The Speech and who had been assured that Jesus would never leave him alone in his pursuit of righteousness, of truth and of justice for his people—would think that a socialist lightweight like Bayard Rustin had anything to teach him about what to say and how to say it in the Oval Office.

But, this is my last word on gender, so back to the "ladies".

The checkers-playing tacticianettes do not, ordinarily, surrender a high-profile position such as Ella Baker enjoyed in the SCLC without bringing in a replacement tacticianette. Such seems to have been the case and the SCLC board soon welcomed to its ranks Marian Logan, a New York fundraiser (friend to the lip-licking? ally of the note-passing?), as Ella Baker turned her attentions, more or less full-time to the radical, unsupervised and wholly secular SNCC.

[The low, nearly bestial nature of the SNCC was always typified for me by its one-time leader James Forman's assertion that "if the powers that be are unwilling to let my people sit at the table of government, we stand ready to knock the fucking legs right off the table," both for the mockery it made of the "Non-violent" part of the SNCC's name and for his vulgarity in saying so in the Beulah Baptist Church.

Yes, sorry, back to the "ladies". Quite right.]

What interested me about Marian Logan was that she circulated a memo to the other members of the SCLC Board in advance of the Poor People's March on Washington (which Martin Luther King whole-heartedly favoured, a position in which he was virtually alone of the SCLC executive):

> *"I doubt very seriously," Logan wrote, that the Washington actions would have any positive effect on Congress. "If anything, the demonstrations may well harden congressional resistance and create an atmosphere conducive not only to the victory of reactionary candidates in the coming elections, but also to the defeat of those candidates who are, or would be, friendly to the social and economic objectives of our struggle." Logan was also concerned that King and SCLC would not "be able to preserve the non-violent image and integrity of our organization" once the protests got under way. Given the "explosive potential of the situation," serious violence would be inevitable. "You say, Martin, that you 'will use disruptive tactics only as a last resort'...but you understand, of course," Logan asserted, "that in view of the likely police response to these disruptive tactics, you are in effect saying that you are prepared to court violence as a last resort." Logan was also "troubled and*

unhappy [emphasis mine] *at how inadequately" the planning had been handled so far. "It does not appear to me, or to anyone with whom I have talked, that an adequate job has been done." And "there is the question of objectives. Have they been clarified? Have you worked out what you will accept, short of your total objectives...?"*

In response to Logan's admonitions, King phoned her almost daily for more than a week in an unsuccessful effort to persuade her to withdraw the complaints, which she had sent to the entire SCLC board. Andrew Young joined in the attempt, writing Logan and her husband, Arthur, that "we are too far gone to turn around" on the campaign. "This is very much a faith *venture..."* [emphasis mine]

King's reaction seems, to me, disproportionate. And yet he persisted, seeming to believe that there was some greater level of importance to the memo than revealed on the surface, as if...as if the *actual* conflict between himself and Marian Logan was taking place on some *loftier* plane of existence, some more *crucial* battlefield than a difference of opinion between an organization's president and one of its board members.

Sometime later

King returned to New York City and went to the home of Marian and Arthur Logan, where he argued with Marian into the early-morning hours about the memo she had distributed to SCLC's board. King was depressed and exhausted, and downed drink after drink as he pressed her to withdraw her objections to the Washington protests. The Logans had spent many similar evenings with King when he had wanted to talk and drink until dawn, seemingly unable to find any rest in sleep, but this night was different and worse. King was unwilling to accept Logan's position and talk about something else. His mood changed repeatedly as the hours passed, from tension to calm, and then back to barely restrained anger, and throughout it all he betrayed unusual anxiety, with one hand tightly holding his frequently refilled glass and the other clenched into a fist with his thumb ceaselessly rubbing against the other fingers. It seemed that King was "losing hold," Marian Logan recalled.

I suspect that that is what happened. In some very real sense, that night King did "lose hold" of the Civil Rights movement and it passed from his hands into those of Marian Logan and her secular-humanist confreres, the checkers-playing tacticianettes, the proto-feminists-in-waiting.

Over the next few days, King continued to phone Marian Logan on almost a daily basis. Finally, on a rain-ravaged night in Memphis he delivered a speech:

I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But, it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop.

And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But, I want you to know, tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And so, I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

"Sweat streaming from his brow, and his eyes watering heavily, King moved to his seat. Some thought him so overcome by emotion that he was crying..."

Early the next evening, Martin Luther King was shot to death on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel.

Of course, Marian Logan's memo could have been just that: a memo. Perhaps it was nothing more...*real*... than that. Perhaps it was—as it appeared on the surface—that Marian Logan merely had some...*hard questions*...for Dr. or Reverend Martin Luther King. *Hard questions* that he had been evading since the early days of the Montgomery Improvement Association. *Hard questions*: not the least of which was "how non-violent can a movement *be* that knowingly courts violence as a means (television coverage) to an end (social change)?"

Or perhaps her *hard questions* were, in some context, larger still, so large that they caused the Civil Rights movement to slip from the hands of Martin Luther King, minister of the gospel message of Jesus Christ, a man chosen by God (can any believer, in retrospect, believe otherwise?) to bring equality and justice to the men of his race, to "speed up the day when all of God's children—black *men* and white *men"*(italics mine) might attain to the promise housed within the preamble to the United States Constitution that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all *men* are created equal..." (italics mine)

...and through her memo, her *hard questions*, Marian Logan was the instrument which caused the Civil Rights movement to pass from Martin Luther King's hands—at the very threshold of destiny, on the very cusp of fulfillment, at the very dawning of that too-long-delayed day—first enunciated as a promise in the Constitution, clarified, subsequently, by Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and, finally, made inevitable by the enshrining of the 13th Amendment abolishing, in 1870, slavery's last outpost on this continent...

...so that *1970* might evermore have been associated as both a centenary and a fulfillment of the black man finding his long-promised and too-long-delayed "place in the sun" of full equality with his white brothers: "Free at last, free at last, Thank God Almighty we are free at last"...but instead...

Instead!

1970 would come to be synonymous with the onset of feminism, wherein the black man found his Civil Rights usurped by those who hold, instead, *these* poisonous, fairy-tale "truths" to be self-evident: that black men are interchangeable with black women and white women, that black men are interchangeable with homosexualists; that black men are interchangeable with children and with infants, that black men are interchangeable with babies, that black men are interchangeable with cats and that black men are interchangeable with dogs.

Because of a) my choice to *not* reprint "Tangent" in the *Form & Void* trade paperback (although it *is* relevant—so far as I'm concerned—to the "Recondite magazine" portion of Ham and Mary Ernestway's story), b) the fact that I have no plans in the foreseeable future to publish any collection of my essays and c) mindful of the fact that issue 186 (despite being universally deplored by male and female feminists) is one of the few *Cerebus* back issues to sell out virtually overnight:

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Dave Sim
Kitchener, Ontario
March 16, 2001